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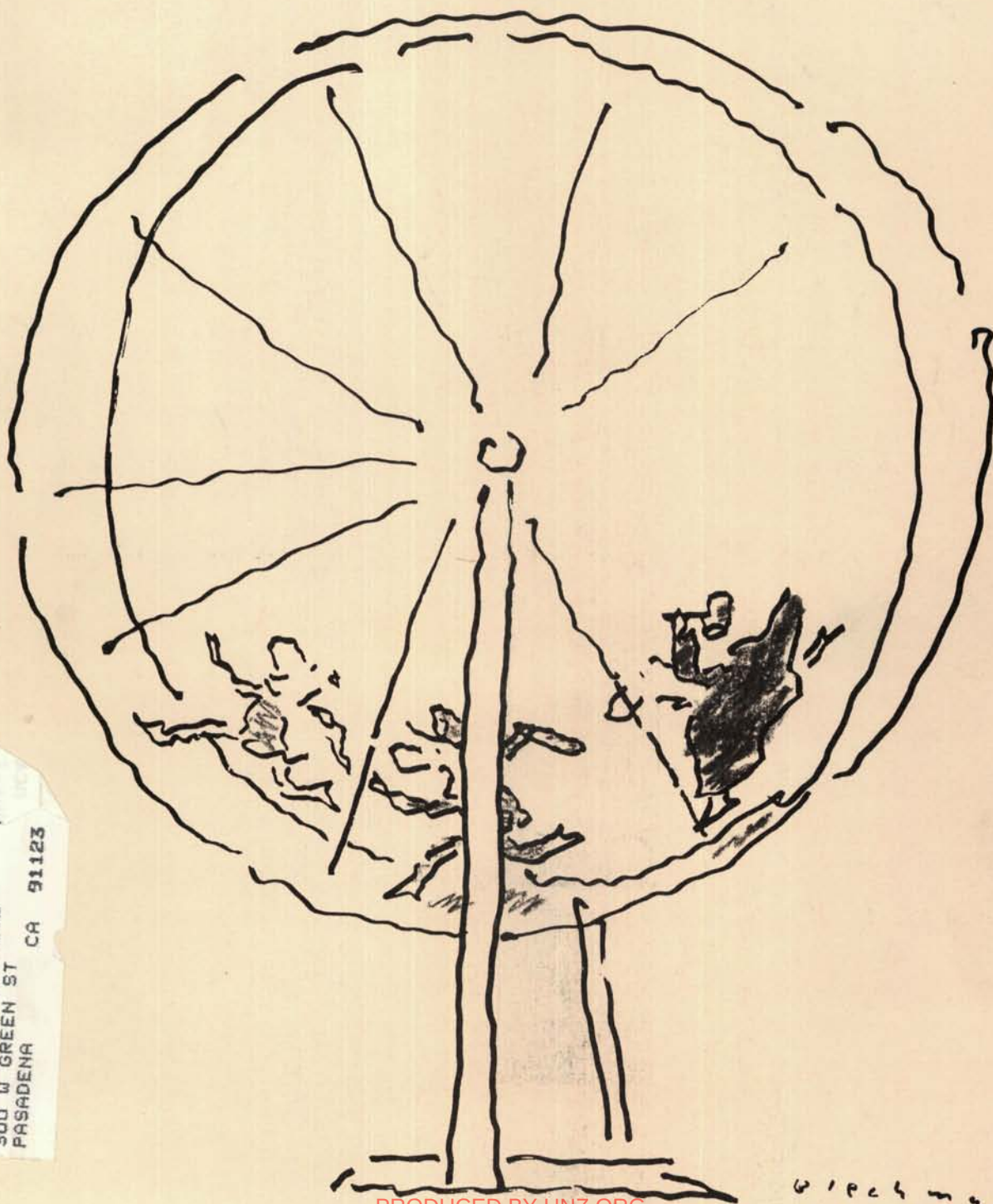
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THE POLITICS OF CRIME

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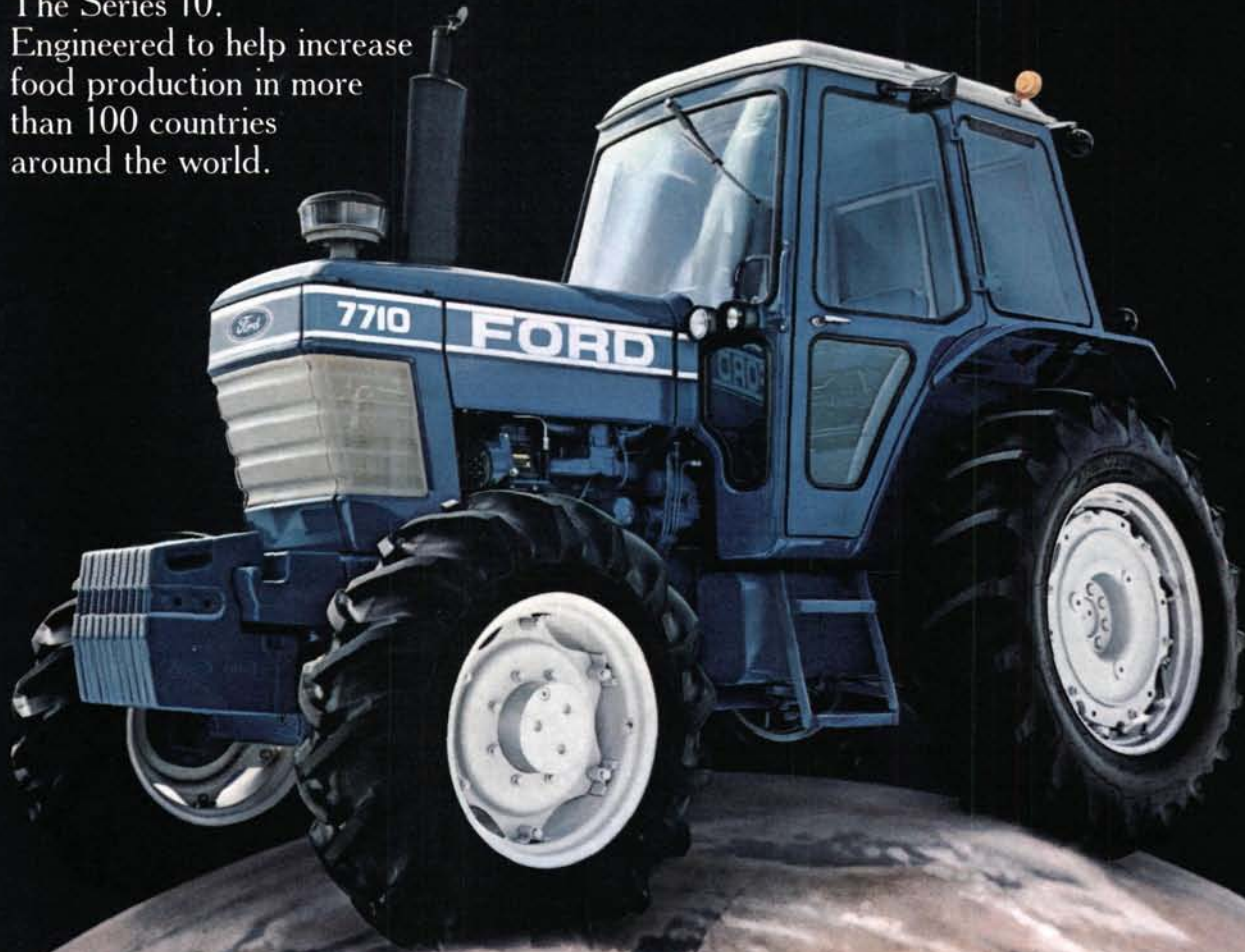
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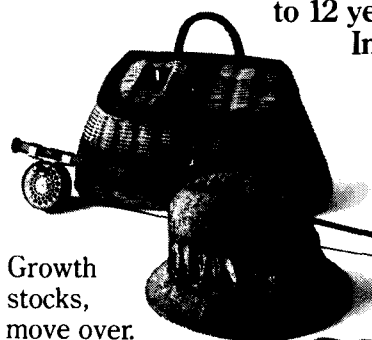
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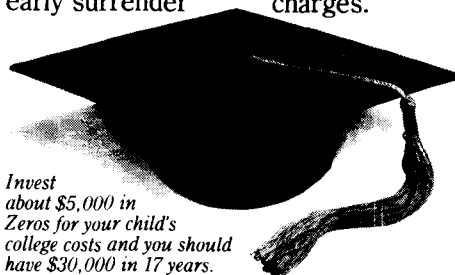
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WAITING FOR THE END

William Martin's fine evaluation of "end-time" preoccupation ("Waiting for the End," June *Atlantic*) was both objective and true. Yet, within the framework of Christian belief and teaching, throughout the history of the Church, men and women have speculated as to the return of Christ and those signs precipitating his return. St. Augustine believed that the millennial period had dawned, and Martin Luther referred to Pope Leo X as the Antichrist.

But it is man who looks for signs and who delights in setting timetables. While the disciples asked Jesus when "these things would come to pass," and what the signs would be of his coming, the Scriptures counsel us to "occupy until He comes" and the words of Jesus to his Church are to live every day in anticipation of his coming.

MICHAEL STREICH
Kernersville, N.C.

William Martin's lucid summary of Darby-Scofield eschatology is probably better than one prepared by someone within the D-S ranks.

A point perhaps overlooked: When Jesus attempted to explain the last days to his followers, he made one point very clear: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32, Acts 1:7).

So much for D-Day, 1987.

RAY REEDER
Hayward, Calif.

I was glad to see William Martin's article on "the growing interest in apocalyptic prophecy," a subject that may now begin to receive the attention it deserves.

Martin avers that "though its growth has occurred mostly within the past two decades, this movement, based on biblical prophecy, had its roots in the nineteenth century." In fact its roots lie in the latter part of the twelfth century, with the Cistercian Joachim of Flora, and it has been a persistent and powerful influence since at least the seventeenth. The armies of Cromwell, the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, were ardent millennial-

ists (which determined their view of the land and natives of this continent), as were many of the Founding Fathers of the Republic.

JEFFREY WOLLOCK
Brooklyn, N.Y.

KISSINGER AND NIXON

Seymour Hersh's portrait of intrigue, distrust, and paranoia inside the White House ("Kissinger and Nixon in the White House," May *Atlantic*) was both appalling and demoralizing. (One wonders what effect all this had on the administration of government and the development of policy.) Hersh is convincing in his effort to link Kissinger with the wiretapping. But he concludes, quite remarkably, that "Kissinger had lied about his role in the wiretapping and his knowledge of the Plumbers was widely assumed in the Washington press corps, and even inside the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, but Kissinger was permitted to slide by with his half-truths and misstatements." If Kissinger's involvement was so "widely assumed" in Washington, why was he allowed to escape virtually unscathed?

ROGER N. BUCKLEY
West Hartford, Conn.

I deplore Seymour Hersh's portrayal of Richard Nixon as drunk in crises. There is not one bit of truth in it.

CHRIS CRAIN
San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

Seymour Hersh's revelations about Kissinger's involvement in wiretapping by the White House is indeed disturbing. However, also disturbing is the total lack of censure by Hersh of those officials who leaked secret material, some of which he acknowledges to have been damaging to the nation.

ROGER W. TUBBY
Lake Placid, N.Y.

NOT-QUITE CHICKENS

Contrary to what Roy Blount, Jr., says in "Chickens" (May *Atlantic*), the egg came first if one accepts Darwin.

The chicken came first if one takes Scripture literally. According to the theory of evolution, a non-chicken produced the first egg, which subsequently produced eggs that produced creatures that produced billions of eggs over billions of years until finally an egg from a not-quite chicken produced an egg with a chicken inside, though exactly when and which egg we may never know.

PATRICK IVERS
Yuma, Ariz.

Roy Blount replies:

I think I had one of those not-quite-chicken eggs this morning.

ADVICE & CONSENT

I regret that editing changes made in the first paragraph of my letter (Letters to the Editor, June *Atlantic*) on Michael Novak's article "Why Latin America is Poor" may leave the impression that Mr. Novak's message "reinforces the Marxist dependency myths that distort Latin America's view of itself." It is the American left that reinforces those

myths. Mr. Novak's article argues persuasively that they *are* myths.

LAWRENCE E. HARRISON
Cambridge, Mass.

Gregg Easterbrook ("The Myth of Oppressive Corporate Taxes," June *Atlantic*) seems to have overlooked an apocalyptic argument for his case against the ACRS, or "10-5-3." By adding the members of this numerical acronym we get 18, or, quite frightfully, the sum of three sixes (see William Martin's "Waiting for the End," same issue).

JOE CORTESE
Hartland, Mich.

Anything "ranging from Celts . . . to . . . Scots" ("The Only Problem in the Universe," May *Atlantic*) doesn't range very far, as anyone named Rory O'Connor should know!

MARY CRAWFORD CLAWSEY
Baltimore, Md.

Leslie Epstein, author of "Life Without Pain," in your June issue, must have spent more than a few moments staring at the magnificent painting in

Boston's Countway Library that depicts the event he writes about—the introduction of anesthesia in American surgery. But to carry that off into such a magnificently constructed fantasy!

MICHAEL FINLEY
Nashville, Tenn.

I have just read and very much enjoyed Wilfrid Sheed's review of *Poets in Their Youth* by Eileen Simpson (June *Atlantic*). However, I feel compelled to remark that the statement "If one has made something beautiful enough, one needs to be praised for it, as God is praised every Sunday for his universe," though quaint, is erroneous. A person who invokes the name of the Almighty more than once in a review, as Mr. Sheed does, must surely know that God, unlike poets and other mortals, does not need anything.

PAIGE CAIN
Landenberg, Pa.

Regarding Byron Harris's article on solar energy ("Solar Energy: No Profit in Politics," May *Atlantic*):

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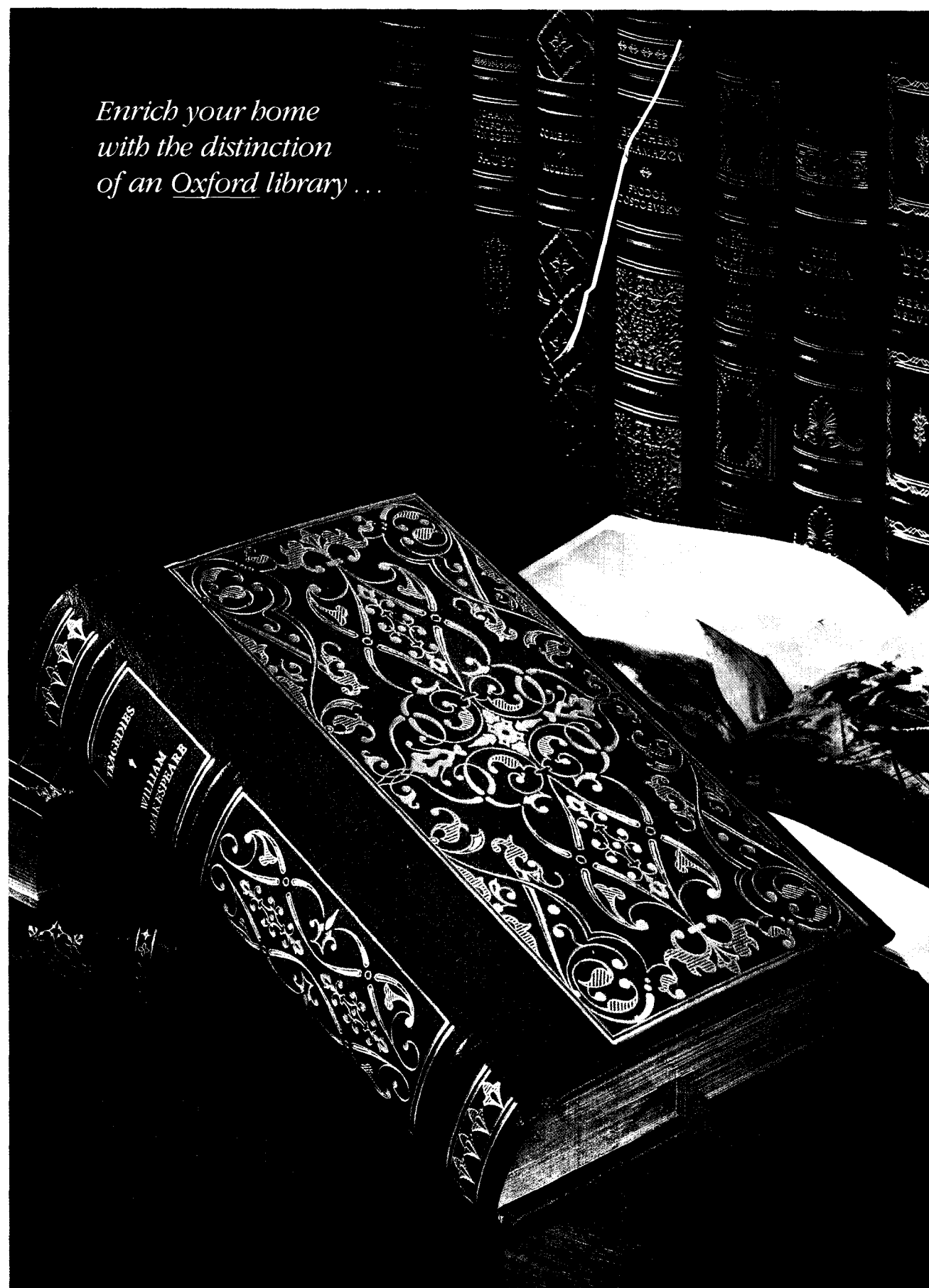
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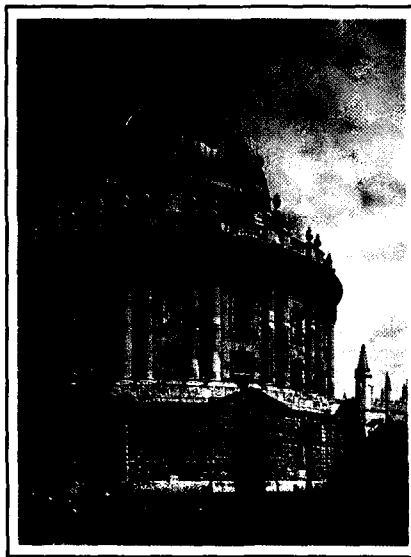
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coal, and nuclear-power lobbies received \$225 billion in government subsidies. After the 1973 oil embargo, politicians began to realize that these subsidies were distorting the marketplace and the development of new energy technologies, such as conservation and renewable energy measures. Although they rapidly increased government solar programs, renewable resources never received more than 8 percent of the Department of Energy's funding.

Still, even some of the 8 percent was poorly spent on costly, high-technology projects promoted by politicians more interested in "pork" for their districts than in solar technologies. Although Harris admits that the simpler and less costly solar programs were highly successful, many solar advocates expected budget reductions in an era of fiscal austerity.

Unfortunately, the Reagan Administration's budget cuts failed to discriminate between good programs and bad, between false starts and first steps. While using free-enterprise rhetoric to slash the solar programs by 70 percent in 1982, the White House increased nuclear-power funding by 36 percent, maintained synthetic fuel subsidies, and granted \$12 billion of new tax benefits to the oil companies.

If President Reagan gets his way, we will actually spend more taxpayer money to clean up the radioactive mess at the Three Mile Island reactor than on energy conservation programs. In fact, we will spend more on military marching bands than on all solar and conservation programs combined.

DICK MUNSON

*Director, Solar Lobby
Washington, D.C.*

Re David Osborne's otherwise cogent article ("Environmental Deregulation," June *Atlantic*), air pollution has never caused "at least 50,000 deaths a year." This number has been reverberating through the halls of environmental interest groups ever since its unfortunate publication several years ago. There is now virtual unanimity among epidemiologists and environmental regulators that the statistical basis for this projection is shaky at best and that the air pollutants on which it was based (suspended sulfate aerosols) are not a major health hazard at any concentration level even remotely imaginable in the U.S.

FREDERICK W. LIPFERT
Northport, N.Y.

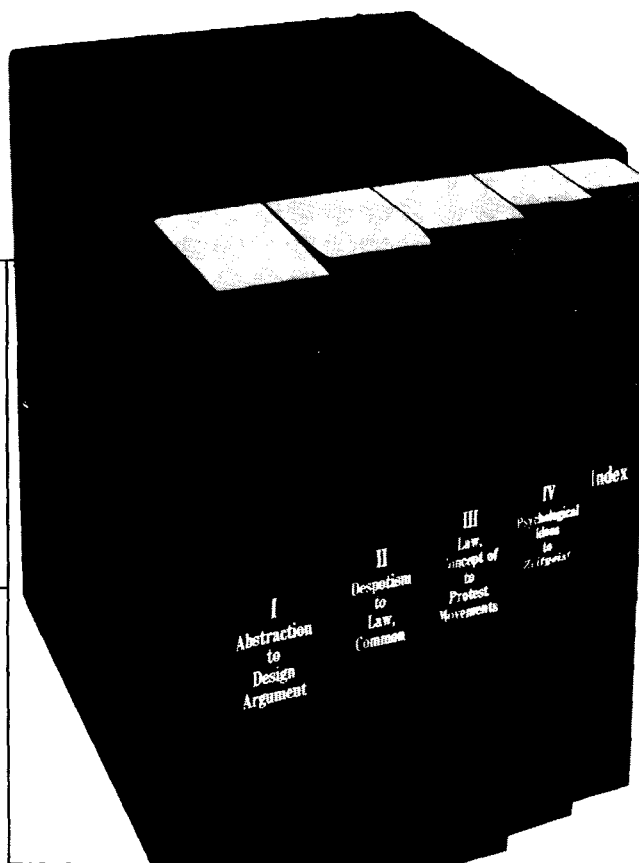
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ECONOMICS

PRODUCING SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

The Eurocurrency system is a splendid construction: a ledger entry here, another there, and presto! Billions of dollars. But can it last in its present form?



IN THE PAST SEVEN months, there has been a fierce debate over whether Poland's *de facto* default on \$25 billion of international debt should be certified *de jure*. The disputants are drawn from the high and mighty of banking, universities, government, and journalism. One side includes Henry Kissinger, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Felix Rohatyn (who saved New York from ruin). The other includes Alexander Haig, Ronald Reagan, and the biggest banks.

Britain shut the windows of its banks to Argentine borrowers, in an action reminiscent of President Carter's financial moves against Iran. Without continued access to new loans, Argentina would be unable to repay old debts.

Poland, Argentina, and Iran are in the big league of international debtors. Each owes at least \$25 billion to the rest of the world. Yet there is no financial panic in London, Frankfurt, or New York. None of the largest banks have failed. This situation suggests a variant of J. Paul Getty's famous lament: \$25 billion lost isn't missed the way it used to be. (Getty said of his fortune, "A billion dollars won't buy what it used to.")

The debate over the declaration of Poland's default is not really about whether we would more effectively punish the Polish regime for its naughtiness by telling it that it has not paid and may not borrow any more (Kissinger's team), or, alternatively, by not telling it today so that we can threaten to tell it tomorrow (Haig's team). The Polish government knows that it has not paid. And it knows that it cannot borrow additional sums.

The real issue concerns not the Poles but the banks. Will the banks be forced to look in their pockets and admit that they have lost \$25 billion, or will they be able to go on pretending that the money is still there?

IN 1816, THOMAS Jefferson wrote with some disgust, "Like a dropsical man calling out for water, water, our deluded citizens are clamoring for more banks, more banks. . . . We are now taught to believe that legerdemain tricks upon paper can produce as solid wealth as hard labor in the earth. It is vain for common sense to urge that *nothing* can produce but *nothing*. . . ." Jefferson was vindicated three years later by a banking panic in which many of the bank notes that had been thought as good as gold were suddenly worth nothing. However, there are also many examples of mere nothings that do amount to something, such as the dollar bills in your pocket.

However much we like to think of money as part of the realm of practical affairs, it nevertheless is essentially an idea, as immaterial as the mood at a cocktail party. Money is whatever we choose to call money. When a bank makes a loan, it is creating money. In Jefferson's time, a lending bank often printed more of its own banknotes to give to the borrower; today, a bank sim-

ply enters a new deposit on its books. The loan gives the borrower an immediate ability to buy things, and is based on the bank's belief that the borrower or his projects can produce sufficient economic goods to pay it back. Since one dollar is indistinguishable from another, there is no telling whether or not particular dollars were created against valid expectations. In some aggregate sense, the worth of the dollars depends on the accuracy of the lender's forecasts, but, more immediately, money is as valid as everyone's willingness to continue to believe in it.

Jefferson would surely have been astonished and appalled by the creation over the past twenty-two years of nearly \$1 trillion in Eurocurrencies by "legerdemain tricks upon paper." The term "Eurocurrency" is misleading since it does not apply only to banks in Europe or European currency. It means deposits in banks in currency different from the one used where the bank is located. Thus Eurodollars are deposits held in dollars all over the world except in the United States and its possessions. A dollar deposit with an American bank in London is a Eurodollar, and a yen deposit with a New York bank is a Euroyen. More than half of all Eurocurrency deposits are held by banks in Europe, and three quarters are held in the form of dollars.

Such deposits have always existed to meet occasional and eccentric needs, but they have expanded enormously in modern times, beginning with the growth of Eurodollars early in the 1960s. At that time, the United States experienced its first persistent balance-of-payments deficits in many decades. The growing emphasis by American corporations on overseas expansion was an important

reason why more dollars went out of the United States than came in. The Kennedy Administration intervened by imposing numerous restrictions on the ability of American businesses and banks to spend or lend dollars outside of the country.

The banks and multinational corporations responded by expanding Eurodollar activities. Although Chase Manhattan in New York was unable to lend money to IBM to build a plant in France or money to Mexico to buy Boeing 727s, U.S. regulations could not prevent Chase Manhattan's London branch from lending dollars for both purposes. Like all bank lending, the expansion of Eurocurrencies from about \$10 billion in 1960 to about \$1 trillion today was a "trick." The lending banks created the new deposits with bookkeeping entries and balanced these new liabilities with the IOUs of the borrowers, which became the banks' new assets.

There is an additional \$1 trillion of Eurodeposits that banks hold with one another. These are not counted, since they can be expanded without limit by a more magical sleight of hand. Suppose Chase Manhattan in London borrows a million dollars from Citicorp in London. Citicorp creates a million-dollar deposit for Chase and accepts a million-dollar IOU from Chase. Now suppose Chase offers to pay its obligation by creating a million-dollar deposit for Citicorp. The IOU is marked "Paid" and returned to Chase, which opens the million-dollar checking account for Citicorp. Each bank has a new million-dollar liability, consisting of the other bank's deposit; and each bank has a new million-dollar asset, consisting of its own deposit at the other bank.

In the domestic banking system, the Federal Reserve and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation stand ready to convert the good assets of banks into dollar bills and to ensure that most depositors can have dollar bills even if the bank's assets are not good. In return for these assurances, domestic banks are required to maintain reserves—in the form of dollar bills in their vaults or deposits at the Federal Reserve—equal to a percentage of their deposit obligations. They are also required to obey specified rules of banking and to submit to periodic audits of their assets and practices.

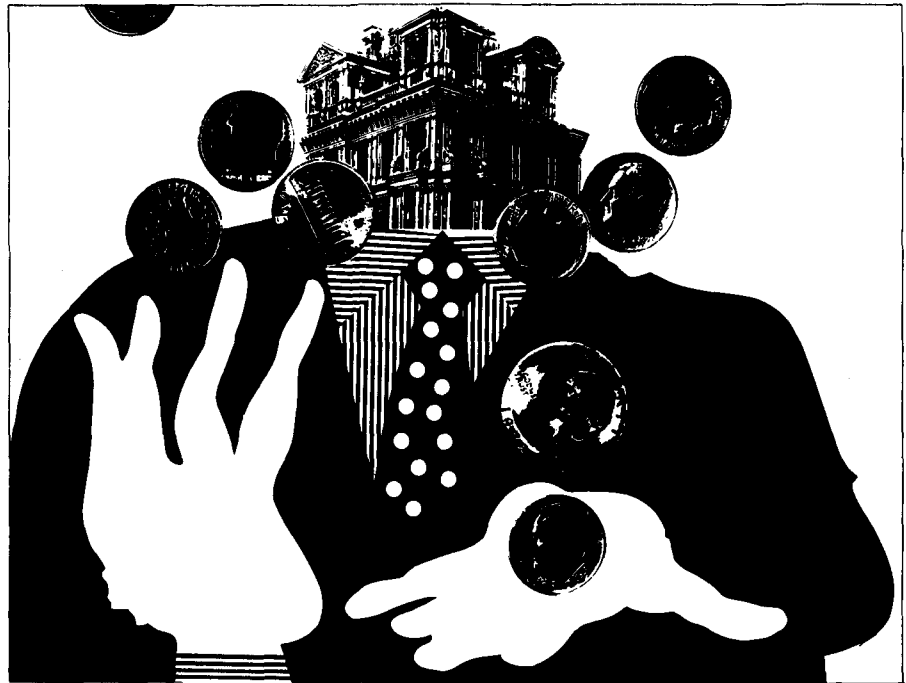
In Eurobanking, there is no deposit insurance. There are no rules, no regula-

tors, no audits. There is no government-created central bank—like the Federal Reserve—that stands ready to print the dollars or marks that depositors might demand. Each bank expects to meet its liquidity requirements by drawing to a small extent on its home office's funds and primarily on its deposits with other banks. This is fine if only one bank is squeezed for liquidity. All the other banks can certainly provide what is needed. However, if the entire system is squeezed, the interbank deposits are of no use. For, as we have seen, they are truly nothing produced by nothing.

The Eurobanks can give their deposi-

purchase military hardware, police-department computers, showcase steel mills, airports, fleets of aircraft, and various other collections of stuff. From the beginning, most of these investments were fated to be unable to earn enough to pay the interest on the loans, much less to repay the principal.

These countries were, not surprisingly, much the same ones that had to borrow heavily in the 1970s to pay for petroleum imports when OPEC increased prices. The Eurocurrency system kept the international flow of goods going and thereby averted potential disaster. Nevertheless, it should be appar-

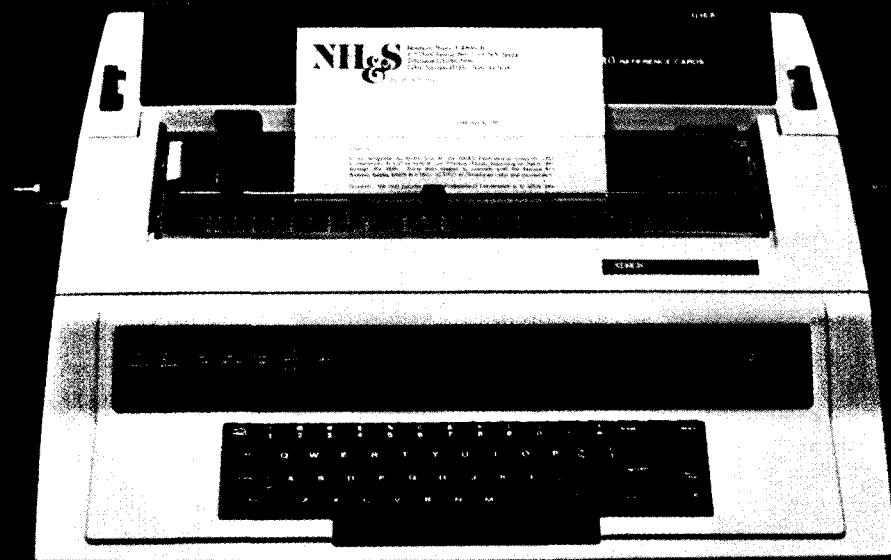
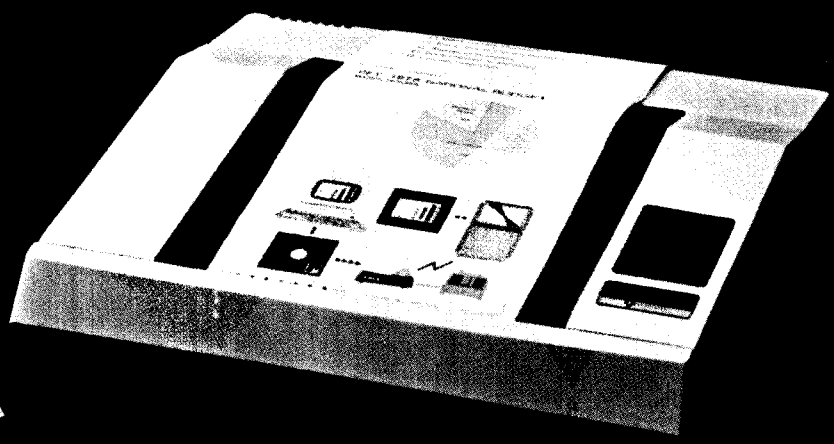
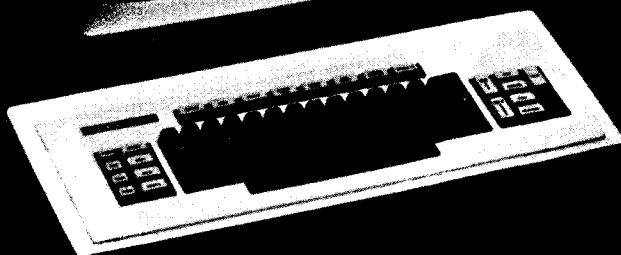
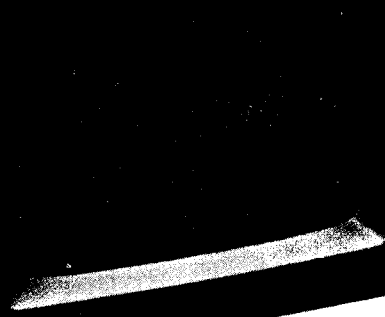
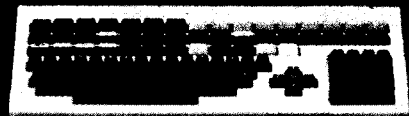
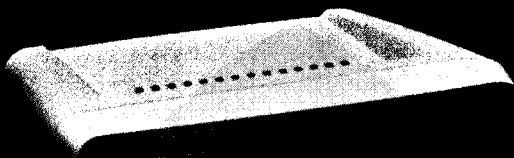


tors money only if they can collect from their borrowers. As always, the deposits they have created are as good as money if the borrowers can pay or if everyone maintains a faith that the deposits *are* money. On close inspection this structure is no more impervious to collapse than its numerous fallen predecessors, including the wildcat banking system that drew Jefferson's attention in the early 1800s.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, most Eurocurrency loans were made to multinationals to finance new overseas plants or to their customers to finance purchase of the multinationals' products. The multinationals have repaid the loans with the profits earned on their new facilities. The customers have not been so fortunate. The typical borrower was a developing country that used the loan to

ent that a country that borrows dollars to import oil, for which it previously paid with its exports, will not have spent the money for any purpose that will enable it to repay the loan.

WITH ONE SET of impossible loans piled on top of another, the viability of this system clearly depends on all the participants keeping their heads high and their pockets buttoned. This demeanor is facilitated by the fact that a small number of players, well acquainted with one another and with the emptiness of all the pockets, dominate the game. More than half the deposits in the system belong to a few dozen multinational corporations and OPEC countries. In the 1960s, the American multinationals kept their revenues in Eurocurrency deposits because U.S. regulations discour-



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aged the repatriation of dollars earned from the sale of computers or aircraft. When the price of oil was increased, OPEC countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait earned more dollars than they could spend, and this excess was deposited in the Eurobanks.

More than half the loans are owed by a few dozen borrowers in the \$25-to-\$50-billion class. And more than half of all the loans and deposits in the system are held by a few dozen of the world's largest banks. When the loans cannot be repaid, these banks follow the line of least resistance, by lending the borrowers enough to repay their previous loans with interest. When the new loan is equally played out, yet another can be provided.

Thus, a few dozen borrowers owe about \$500 billion, which they cannot repay. This amount increases by about \$60 billion each year through interest alone, not to mention new credits. The handful of banks to which this enormous sum is owed have now grown accustomed to lending additional sums regularly to their impecunious clients so that the original debts can be marked as paid. A few dozen oil-exporting countries and giant corporations hold the same \$500 billion of total deposits in Eurobanks. The value of these deposits also grows by about \$60 billion each year through interest earned by the depositors.

If the depositors do not demand their money from the banks, then the banks needn't demand payment from the borrowers. So long as the banks roll over their loans and the depositors roll over their deposits, everyone is happy. The borrowers continue to enjoy their airplanes, computers, or tanks without being compelled to make impossible sacrifices. The banks report rapidly growing loan portfolios with splendid collection records, and rapidly growing deposits and profits. The depositors report a bundle of supremely safe deposits with the world's best-known banks.

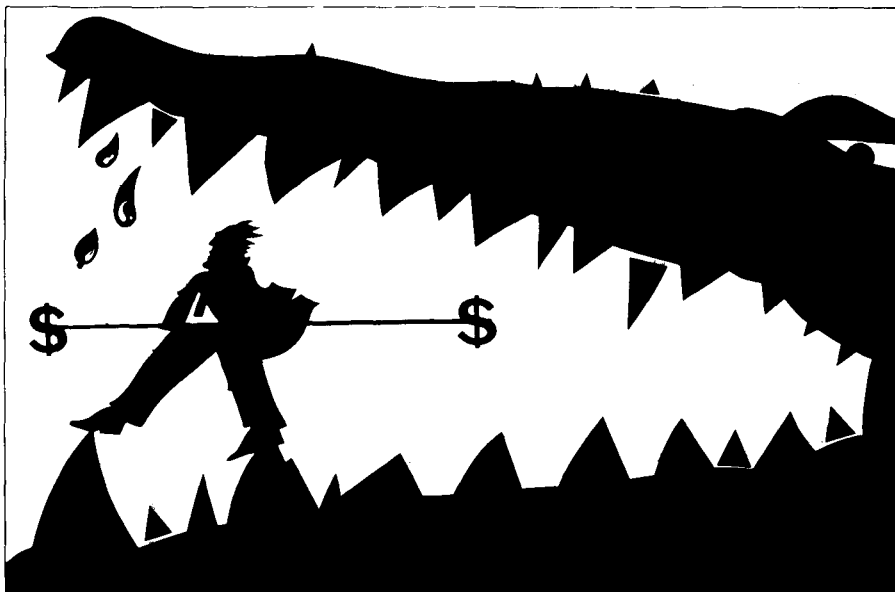
The stability of this structure depends on the continued stability and rationality of its hundred or so principal players. A passing familiarity with history, human nature, or current events will suggest that this splendid construction has the permanence of a sand castle. Eurobanks have served the world well. They have contributed to the prosperity of advanced countries and the progress of developing nations. They have helped to minimize the impact of the OPEC price shocks. They have even provided useful

services for central banks attempting to deal with exchange-rate imbalances. Now, however, we have the devil to pay. The Eurocurrency system is being strained to the breaking point by political pressures, international economic contraction, and the growing unease of its major participants. It is past time for the world's central banks to offer the same liquidity and guarantees to Euro-

banking that they provide to their domestic banking systems. They should simultaneously impose similar rules and regulations.

—Robert B. Zevin

Robert B. Zevin, an economist and senior vice president of the United States Trust Company, is writing a book on contemporary political economy.



TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS ON THE EDGE

This poor country has escaped many of the problems of its neighbors, but U.S. policies may be propelling it into the regional crisis



THE HIGH POINTS of Honduran history are few and far between. In ancient times, the area occupied by the modern country was something of a southern buffer for the Mayan empire. That past is still in evidence at the stunning ruins of Copán, in the northwest, where, long before Columbus and Cortés, sophisticated astrologers worked out the precise Mayan calendar. In the sixteenth century, after conquistadors had pushed south from Mexico to claim Central America for the Spanish crown, Honduras experienced a brief fame because of the silver in its mountains and the gold dust suspended in its tropical streams—until the ores ran out, early in the 1600s.

Then, in the early nineteenth century, after the Spanish had left the area in the wake of Mexican independence, it was a Honduran, Francisco Morazán, who served as second and last president of the short-lived, independent Federal Republic of Central America. The latest moment of notoriety occurred in 1969, when Honduras went to war with neighboring El Salvador following a disputed soccer match between the national teams.

Outside of these infrequent moments of renown, Honduras, a land the size of Ohio that stretches across the Central American isthmus from the Caribbean to the Pacific, has slumbered in relative obscurity. With its ores depleted centuries ago, the population of 3.7 million has been reduced to dependence on the export sale of bananas, coffee, beef, and lumber. The per capita income of \$565 a year makes Honduras the poorest country in the Americas with the exception of Haiti. Aside from Morazán, who resigned in 1839 after his dream of a viable subcontinental federation had splintered into the independent states of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, the country by and large has

been governed by a desultory lot of ineffective, often corrupt, too frequently repressive rulers: civilian politicians of one or another conservative stripe, or authoritarian generals or colonels who, as in so much of Latin America, have made the coup d'etat the most common instrument of political change. Since the Spaniards abandoned Honduras to its own impoverished resources, the country has weathered 126 changes of government, sixteen different constitutions, and 385 separate uprisings and coups.

Ironically, the land's precarious existence as a poor and unstable backwater has proven almost as much a blessing as a curse. Staggering national poverty spared the people the oppressive plantation feudalism that Spain imposed on Honduras's better-endowed neighbors, Guatemala, El Salvador, and, to a lesser extent, Nicaragua. Derived from the early *encomiendas*, which had been created by the Spaniards to exploit native cacao crops with Indian slave labor, the iniquitous plantation system spawned, in its turn, the rapacious Central American oligarchies that have sought to perpetuate their monopoly of economic and political power throughout this century. The oligarchs, who have been challenged in recent years by a growing middle class and an emboldened peasantry, have resisted violently any and all reforms. That, more than the opportunistic machinations of Cuba's Fidel Castro, is the root of the social upheaval now destabilizing Central America and panicking Washington.

Vast tracts of Honduran banana lands are owned and were dominated until quite recently by U.S. firms such as United Brands and the Standard Fruit & Steamship Company. This foreign presence has created its own internal tensions, but because of Honduras's historical lack of a greedy oligarchy, and an army conditioned to serve the oligarchs rather than the state, the country has been spared the acute social cleavages that have led its neighbors into revolution and civil war. In Honduras, the question has been one less of sharing the nation's wealth than of sharing its poverty. In this sense, Honduras has been far more just and evenhanded with its population than have the troubled nations on its borders—at least until 1979, when the Sandinista revolution drastically altered conditions in Nicaragua. In a region of vast *haciendas* (huge plantations for the production of export crops), Hon-

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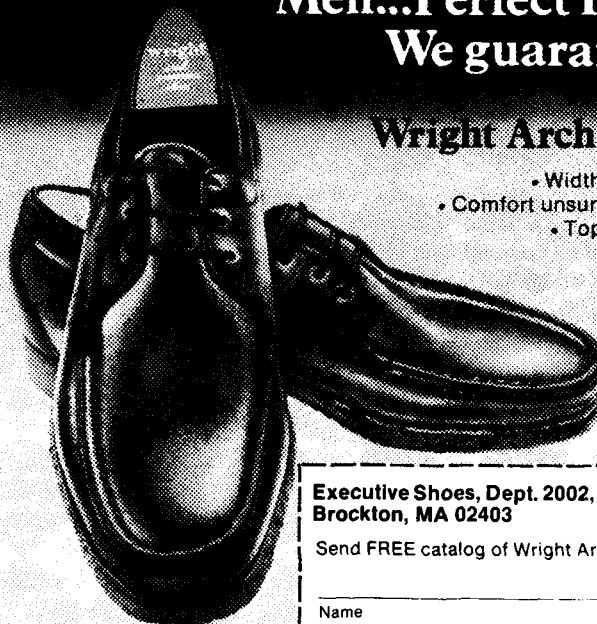
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duras's 12,000 "major" estates average but 120 acres; and whereas among its neighbors the land ownership on which power and wealth in Central America depend has been monopolized by the very few, in Honduras two thirds of the people who use the land either own it outright or have legally guaranteed rights to its use.

HONDURANS ARE understandably proud of the things that set them apart from their neighbors. They boast of the boldness of at least some of their newspapers, the autonomy of the national university, and the openness of political dialogue. The unfettered trade unions have gained enough muscle in the past decade to rein in the power of the U.S. fruit companies that long influenced the politics in Tegucigalpa, the hilly national capital. A visitor traveling through this volatile region is quick to note that, despite a long tradition of military involvement in politics, Honduran cities and towns have significantly fewer of the oppressive signs of martial dominion and sinister secret-police extremism that are so prevalent in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Incidents of political terrorism, though on the rise, remain the exception rather than the rule.

Most important, *Hondureños* point out, is the nation's return to democratic civilian rule this year after eighteen years of military-controlled governments. The change was initially prompted by pressure from the Carter Administration, which was eager to see Honduras avoid the problems of its undemocratic neighbors. Last November, a military junta, led by Brigadier General Policarpo Paz Garcia, went through with national elections that had been mandated by a new constitution drawn up a year earlier by an elective constituent assembly. Despite encouragement from some of his fellow officers and civilian conservatives to postpone the elections—on the grounds that the pressure for change had been lessened with the advent of the Reagan Administration, which is openly more concerned with anti-communism than with civil rights—General Paz Garcia kept his word and guaranteed the choice of the electorate, even after the defeat of his longtime civilian ally Ricardo Zuniga Augustinus, the presidential candidate of the conservative Nationalist Party. Despite rumors of impending coups to reverse the re-

sults, the military junta officially handed over power in January to President Roberto Suazo Cordova, a fifty-four-year-old country doctor whose moderate Liberal Party had won a decisive 54 percent of the national vote.

Unfortunately, astute Hondurans and foreign diplomats alike fear that the nation's fragile new democracy has been doomed from the start, because of a monumental economic crisis that seems beyond solution and because of policies that are being promoted by the U.S. government—policies that are propelling Honduras into a potentially self-destructive involvement in the wider Central American conflict.

The economic crisis inherited by President Suazo would make any government stumble. In the worldwide general recession, which has been particularly brutal to Third World nations, the chronically weak Honduran economy has been hit by rising energy costs, a disastrously soft international market for its agricultural exports, sagging productivity, a negative investment climate, and a steady drain of capital caused by widespread uncertainty over the region's future. High interest rates have left the government struggling with payments on its \$1.7 billion national debt, while foreign currency reserves have shrunk below \$18 million. With the gross national product unable even to keep up with population growth, and an inflation rate estimated at anywhere between 17 and 45 percent a year, unemployment and social unrest have begun to soar.

U.S. economic aid this year rose to \$48.1 million. This sum is helpful, but Mario Rietti, one of President Suazo's leading advisers on the economy, maintains that the country needs \$1.5 billion over the next four years if it is to pull out of its tailspin, and no one, in or out of government, is sanguine that such a staggering amount will be forthcoming.

THE THREAT TO Honduras's long-cherished domestic tranquillity comes less from the economic disaster the country is experiencing than from its slow slide into the international conflict raging beyond, and across, its borders.

Honduras's growing involvement in Washington's anti-Communist crusade in Central America is rooted in the ambivalence of U.S. policy. While U.S. officials encouraged the democratic transition from military to civilian rule, in order to hold up Honduras as a model of the

peaceful social change Washington claimed it would like to see, that policy was being undermined by a correlative effort to reinforce the Honduran military with new weapons and logistical and communications equipment. In the Central American region, where one side of the civil strife is openly backed, though scarcely exclusively motivated, by Marxists, the Honduran military could be an instrument of U.S. national interests. Washington policy-makers seem unable to grasp the possibility of conflict between the goals of the military and those of their traditional civilian rivals.

U.S. concern over Honduran security materialized only in 1980, after the Sandinistas had entrenched themselves in Nicaragua to the south and leftist insurgents had begun to gather strength in El Salvador, across a rugged, sparsely settled border to the west. By that time, Honduras, a weak and neutral vacuum, was drawing refugees from both countries, as it had done earlier with those escaping the violence of Guatemala's long insurgency. Hundreds of members of Somoza's disbanded National Guard were camped on isolated estates along the Nicaraguan border, while thousands of Salvadoran refugees with suspected guerrilla sympathies were massed in refugee camps just inside the western border. For the first time, U.S. security officials became aware not only of Honduras's vulnerability to contagion from the political refugees but also of the country's strategic position, surrounded by three strife-torn nations.

For all its insistence on the importance of human rights, it was the Carter Administration that signaled a change in focus by dispatching Jack Binns, the first career Foreign Service officer in a decade to serve as ambassador in Honduras. Hardly had Ambassador Binns taken up his post than an agreement was reached between Washington and Tegucigalpa for the lease of ten UH-1 Huey helicopters to enhance the army's ability to patrol its refugee-clogged borders. The first military training teams (MTTs)—current Pentagonese for U.S. military advisers—arrived shortly thereafter to teach Honduran pilots and mechanics how to operate and maintain the Hueys. Immediately after Reagan's defeat of President Carter, Ambassador Binns proclaimed the obvious. "The United States," he said in Tegucigalpa, "is looking for a vigorous Honduran role in Central America."

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Just how eagerly the United States sought such a role for Honduras became clearer after President Reagan was sworn into office and Secretary of State Alexander Haig targeted Central America for his first foreign-policy initiative. In the year and a half since the Reagan Administration took office, sounding the alarms over still unproven Cuban and Russian instigation of the region's revolts, the embassy staff in Tegucigalpa has mushroomed to 116 full-time employees—one of the largest U.S. diplomatic missions in Latin America. Despite his enthusiasm for Reagan's election, Binns was tarred as a soft-headed Carter man and was replaced this year by John Negroponte, who was a political officer in the Saigon embassy at the height of the Vietnam War. U.S. military aid to Honduras has been increased from \$3 million in 1980 to \$10.6 million this year, with plans to raise it to \$14 million in 1983.

With the new aid has come a steady stream of U.S. advisers, whose numbers at one point earlier this year reached a high of ninety-eight, more than double the number of advisers operating in El Salvador. While training is the official object of their mission, at least one squad of three U.S. Green Berets has been spotted along the Salvadoran border with a platoon of Honduran soldiers. The official embassy explanation at the time was that they were not combat specialists but communications experts, training their counterparts in the field.

With the guerrilla movement in El Salvador stronger than ever, despite all the U.S. military equipment, training, and tactical advice lavished on the Salvadoran army, and with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua still unrepentant in the face of Washington's economic boycott and repeated threats to force an end to Nicaragua's open support of the Salvadoran rebels, the administration has turned to covert operations as a more effective and efficient tool against the leftists than overt actions have been. According to official U.S. and Honduran sources, Washington has chosen to make Honduras its base for the subversion and destabilization of Nicaragua, just as Secretary of State Dulles used the country a quarter of a century earlier to orchestrate the downfall of Jacobo Arbenz's reformist government in Guatemala.

The proposal to launch a major covert campaign against Nicaragua from Honduras was presented for consideration to President Reagan by CIA Director Wil-

liam Casey at a meeting of the National Security Council held on November 16. The plan, it has been reliably reported, had the approval of both Secretary of State Haig and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. The CIA proposal, which called for the expenditure of \$19 million to train a non-U.S. force of 500 men, presumably anti-Sandinista exiles already in Honduras, was taken under advisement by the President, while the meeting approved a separate nine-point plan to intensify overt operations against Nicaragua. However, the President is understood to have given his personal approval subsequent to the CIA proposal. Although officials refuse to comment, it is generally accepted by knowledgeable sources in Tegucigalpa that the force is now being trained along the Nicaraguan border, in areas that were put off-limits by the Honduran army last spring.

While the plan envisaged the use of Argentine army advisers in the training, paid for out of CIA operational funds, that idea seems to have been aborted after the Falklands crisis. Argentine advisers known to have been in Honduras teaching counterinsurgency and "prisoner interrogation" techniques to the Honduran army and police force were withdrawn after Argentina went to war with Great Britain.

THE SPEED WITH which Honduras has been made a player in the regional conflict has stunned the country's leaders. Conditioned by Honduras's political past, the new civilian government is sensitive to the prominent role assigned by Washington to the Honduran armed forces, which are headed by Colonel Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, an Argentine-trained officer who is greatly respected by the Pentagon. Honduran politicians are worried that the military is reinforcing its power and confidence at the cost of building up the democratic government. Despite the transition to civilian rule, there is a nagging fear that it is Colonel Alvarez rather than President Suazo who is the ultimate arbiter of the nation's destiny.

President Suazo is aware that conflict, internal or external, only strengthens the army's hand, and he has been desperate to find a means of restoring his nation's tarnished neutrality to give Honduran democracy a chance. To that end, he sent his foreign minister, Edgardo Paz Barnica, to Washington in

March to urge on his fellow foreign ministers in the twenty-eight-member Organization of American States (OAS) a six-point regional peace initiative that was as commendable as it was blind to Central America's ugly realities. Among other things, the plan called for regional disarmament; a mutual reduction of foreign advisers; international supervision of borders, harbors, airports, and strategic installations; and a permanent mechanism for multilateral dialogue among the region's contentious nations. In presenting his president's ambitious proposal, Paz Barnica was at once eloquent and disingenuous about how far Honduras has slipped into the maelstrom. He told his fellow foreign ministers:

"Our country does not wish to see itself caught up in the violence afflicting Central America. Our country is anxious to remain at peace internally and internationally. . . . Our country wishes to dedicate itself to the consolidation and defense of its democratic system of government. Honduras, its people and government, neither desire nor tolerate their territory being used for actions to destabilize the region, and they call on the states of the region to make an effort to find civilized formulas of coexistence and frank and unhesitant dialogue."

The proposal was dutifully applauded, then shelved, to the disappointment of the Honduran government. "When we talk of peace, no one listens and there are no headlines," said Carlos Flores Faccussé, the minister to the president. "If we had talked of war, everyone would have sat up, and there would be headlines everywhere. . . ."

The president's hopeful peace proposal at the OAS, however, was offset by Colonel Alvarez who, in an interview on Mexican television, proclaimed that Honduras, like its neighbor El Salvador, "now is confronting an armed aggression from the Soviet Union by way of Cuba." To the shock of his government back home, he said openly that if there were no other way to defend his nation, he would welcome U.S. military intervention in Central America. After centuries of existence on the obscure fringes of Central American politics, Honduras had finally come clearly into the mainstream.

—Loren Jenkins

Loren Jenkins is a foreign correspondent for The Washington Post, based in Rome. He frequently reports on Central America.

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ARGENTINA THE FALKLANDS AND COLONIALISM

Long before the war, the British role in the islands represented to Argentines the unfairness of the international order



BY ASSERTING ITS sovereignty over the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands), an unpopular Argentine government made a clumsy gesture. Even so, Argentines from all social strata, all ethnic groups, and all political parties—even though often critical of that government—supported its actions and were joined by many other Latin Americans. As Americans try to understand what happened, we should look to Argentine history for the messages and morals it holds, not only for Argentines but for South Americans in general.

Unfortunately, a key aspect of Argentine history and culture—its colonial identity—is entirely foreign to most people in Europe and the United States, few of whom have lived in a culture constantly influenced, pressured, and used by another. However, a colonial culture, with its built-in, never-resolved problems of dominance and subordination, is the only one most Latin Americans know. And this experience as a colonial people has accounted for the commit-

ment of Argentines to their government's position in the Malvinas.

Relations between the English and the Argentines have long been close—too close for many Argentines, who see the British, not the Spaniards, as the colonizing force in their past. For nearly two centuries, Argentines have felt themselves and their interests pitted against hostile powers, but particularly against England, the English, and the threat of English force at English whim. Even before Argentina gained independence from Spain, it was dominated by English financial interests. The British invaded and occupied Buenos Aires in 1806 and in 1807, but were dislodged by Creole troops and citizens on both occasions. In 1828, English pressure led to the establishment of Uruguay as a buffer state to maintain a better climate for British commerce. And in 1833, Englishmen seized the Malvinas when a party of Royal Marines landed, struck the Argentine flag, raised the Union Jack, and prepared to establish a permanent British naval base.

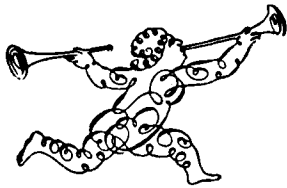
Argentines are conscious of the benefits the British bestowed upon them, but they point out that these benefits often were more advantageous to the British than to the Argentines. The railroads constructed in the 1870s and thereafter, for example, were built in a fanlike pattern, converging on Buenos Aires not to facilitate communication or stimulate markets within Argentina but to move resources to the port for shipment to England and its trading partners. They also note with some bitterness that though Queen Victoria reportedly once

referred to Argentina as a British colony, she confined Britain's role to exploiting Argentina's resources, playing no part in the country's economic, political, or cultural development, as the English claimed to be proud of doing in their colonies.

The Argentines placed only limited confidence in an international order that they perceived as disregarding their interests. Further, as they saw the policies of their government often determined by international pressure, their confidence in any system waned. At the same time, they experienced the painful ambivalence inherent in the relationship between a subordinated people and the power that dominates them. British technology, British business, and British fashion were everywhere of the highest standard, but for Argentina, that standard was too often unattainable.

In Argentina, British models are given a particular vitality by the elite and prosperous community of Argentines of British descent, some of whom make a concerted effort to identify with their South American homeland. Their successful blending with their Argentine backdrop makes all the more conspicuous the condescending attitude of those who refuse to merge and the anguish of those who try to blend in and fail. I once heard a fourth-generation grandmother condemn the very thought of intermarrying with "the natives." At a dance just a few hours later, her granddaughter leaned over to say despairingly, "Look how handsome the Argentine men are! And I don't dare dance with them because I am afraid they will laugh at my Spanish." Meanwhile, Harrods was long the most elegant store in Buenos Aires; St. George's is still its most prestigious private school; English tearooms, hotels, and restaurants remain among the most fashionable; and British clubs have been centers of social activities from Buenos Aires to the Straits of Magellan.

To the Argentines, the Malvinas epitomize their relationship with the British. Long before the recent crisis, the islands figured in political discourse and daily conversation as a focus of resentment against the high-handedness Argentina had come to expect from world powers. In 1829, Argentina began a systematic colonization of the Malvinas under Governor Louis Vernet, with a plan for long-term development. The British consul at the time described Vernet as impressively knowledgeable and prepared for the



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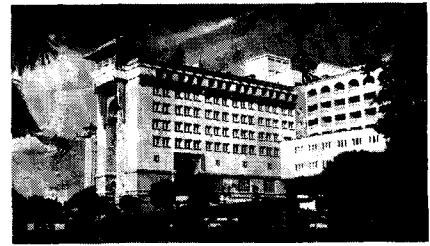
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task. Vernet thought the islands could become a provisioning point for sealers and whalers in the area. American sealers, however, preferred not to have to pay for their provisions. In protest, Vernet seized an American sealing vessel, only to find his colony destroyed by American gunboats and surviving colonists taken off to be tried as pirates. The next year the British moved in, confident that the Argentines would recognize the futility of opposition. This assessment was correct, but the Argentines never accepted British occupation of the Malvinas. In their view, the islands had not been lost in an unsuccessful war or negotiated away in an unfavorable treaty. They had simply been usurped, with no basis other than force to justify the British claim.

A greeting card sold in Buenos Aires bookstores depicts an alarmed Uncle Sam clutching the reins of a plunging wild horse labeled "Argentina" while John Bull clucks sympathetically: "And I turned him over to you so well-tamed, too." Today, despite England's place in their country's historical drama, Argentines know that England's role has been taken over by the United States. In the aftermath of England's decline, they see themselves as pawns in a game between superpowers. Argentina's response to this perception has been a series of attempts to establish an alternative position. Its neutrality through most of World War II, for example, was less a reflection of fascist influence on its leadership than an expression of a particular type of nationalism. A similar statement of independence may be in the offing in the wake of the Malvinas crisis as the military confrontation and economic sanctions imposed by England's European and other allies forced Argentines to turn to the Soviet Union for support. For the Argentines, the overwhelming consideration will be how to survive in a world in which the powerful are pitted against the powerless.

THE ENGLISH, AND those who have supported or replaced them, have consistently seemed to act as though Argentine culture and geography do not exist. Like other Latin Americans, Argentines are born into a Western world that denies any value to their culture, and consequently denies them an identity. A Brazilian professor who had been part of a delegation to convince European banks that his country would be a

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trustworthy recipient of loans summed up the treatment they had received by observing, "We are just Indians to the rest of the world." In a similar vein, an Argentine sociologist who was discussing the Malvinas said, "The English are treating us like natives."

The Argentines have virtually no pre-Columbian heritage to which they can turn for an identity. In this, they are an extreme case of a condition shared by all Latin Americans. Precisely because non-European culture has never been entirely accepted in the West, an indigenous American identity has commanded little respect. Neither has it been easily adopted by large numbers of Latin Americans traditionally educated in the context of European cultures and values.

In Argentina, for most, returning to an "original" culture is not an option. Latin American nations—Argentina is a pure case—share virtually no experience "before" colonization to contrast with experience "afterward." Europeans displaced Indian cultures, leaving little room for native tradition in mainstream Latin American civilization as it is known today. Most Latin Americans have only known predominantly European cultures. In a very few cases, leaders have consciously chosen to revive indigenous identities long after colonization. Attempts to claim an identification with Amerindian civilizations demand the total re-education of large groups, a task that would make gargantuan demands on the imagination as well as on the pocketbook.

At the same time, the powers that dominate the Western world negate Latin America's claims to a European heritage. They do this through ignorance of Latin American intellectual and material culture as well as through apparent disdain for Latin American politics and disregard of Latin American needs. Latin Americans participate in a Western culture that—as they read world opinion, reflected in the media, in academia, in the arts, and in politics—acts as if they are not there.

In such a context, the need for national identity becomes an obsessive problem, and all but impossible to solve. Much of the world diagnoses the difficulty as immaturity. No amount of maturity, however, will change the conditions that determine the political and economic insecurity that has arisen from Latin America's position relative to the rest of

the world. The ultimate causes of instability lie in the colonial relationships that marked the formation of Latin American nations.

Industrializing powers in the nineteenth century wanted materials for their factories and outlets for their manufactured goods. As they opened new areas, they discouraged competition, in part by offering unbeatable prices on manufactured wares from their established industries. Argentines, for example, could buy ponchos more cheaply from England than from their own cottage industry. The new economies came to concentrate on supplying foreign markets with raw materials, such as ores and, later, oil, or in the case of Argentina, meat, wool, and grains. Unlike the prices of manufactured goods, which have tended over the years to rise, the prices of primary products are notorious for their unpredictable fluctuations. The resulting booms and busts destroy Latin Americans' markets and shake their regimes, reinforcing popular distrust of any system of order or government.

A mature perception of humanity in these conditions—conditions that, after all, characterize the experience of most of the world's people—has informed the masterly Latin American literature of the fantastic, as in the novels of García Márquez, of Colombia, among them *100 Years of Solitude*, or the poetry and short stories of Borges, of Argentina. García Márquez's worlds, where no borderlines separate the real from the unreal, and Borges's endless mirrors and alternative universes pose questions about identity that are acutely and specifically meaningful rather than recon-dite to an Argentine public. At the same time, a despised and economically weak culture generates social violence. This is the insight of Graciliano Ramos, who depicted the desperate peasantry of the Brazilian northeast; of Mario Vargas Llosa, of Peru, when he points to the confrontation between utopian religious sects and the Brazilian government's troops as a theme for all of Latin America; and of José Hernández, whose *Martin Fierro* became the beloved national saga of Argentina:

I've been tame at first
Now I'll be an outlaw gaucho
... Now I know the world
... I know how they snare people
and manipulate them
I will undo the knots if I have to die
doing it.

If one stands for it, he is a stupid gaucho

If one doesn't stand for it, he's a bad gaucho

... this is a gaucho's luck

Let's go, luck, let's go together

Since together we were born

and since together we live, without
being able to separate ourselves
from one another,

I will open the path we follow with
my knife.

For the Argentines, the Malvinas represent years of negotiations over a central national concern, incarnating their bitter experience as a nonentity in the minds and policies of others. As they see it, the islands have been an insignificant matter for the British, who have felt no need to decide the question of national control in more than 100 years of negotiation.

The British did nothing even when, in 1976, the Shackleton Survey Team submitted to Parliament its assessment of the economic viability of the Falklands under British rule, demonstrating that the United Kingdom must either make a major financial commitment or accept increasing dependence on Argentina. Finally, in 1981, England proposed a twenty-five-year freeze on negotiations; Argentina rejected the proposal. Argentines assumed that decades of delay on a matter so important to Argentina could only mean that the English intended to humiliate their country. If the affront was unintentional, it was a doubly insulting sign that Argentina and its claims meant nothing to England.

The Panamanian representative to the UN Security Council asserted, after casting the sole vote to support Argentina, that "invading" the Islas Malvinas was the only way Argentina could dramatize for the world a claim it had been making continuously for 150 years. This was the only way the Argentines could make the claim real to anyone outside Latin America. When the rest of the world denies Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas, it also denies, in the eyes of the Argentines, that Argentina exists.

—J. M. Taylor

J. M. Taylor, who teaches anthropology at Rice University, lived in England for three years and worked in Argentina, Brazil, and Peru for five years. She is the author of Eva Perón: The Myths of a Woman.

The Surface Contingent

The Surface Contingent

A recent finding at the General Motors Research Laboratories has changed scientific thinking about the behavior of electrons in metal surfaces. This discovery provides a greater understanding of the fundamental physical processes involved in such surface events as adhesion, corrosion and catalysis.

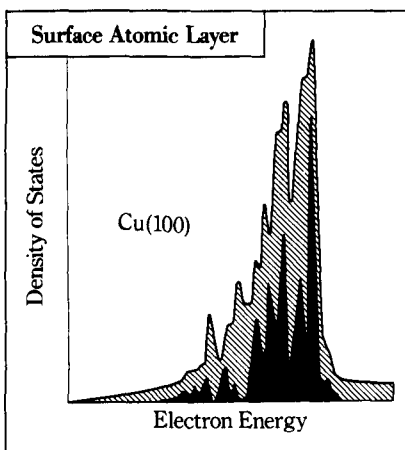
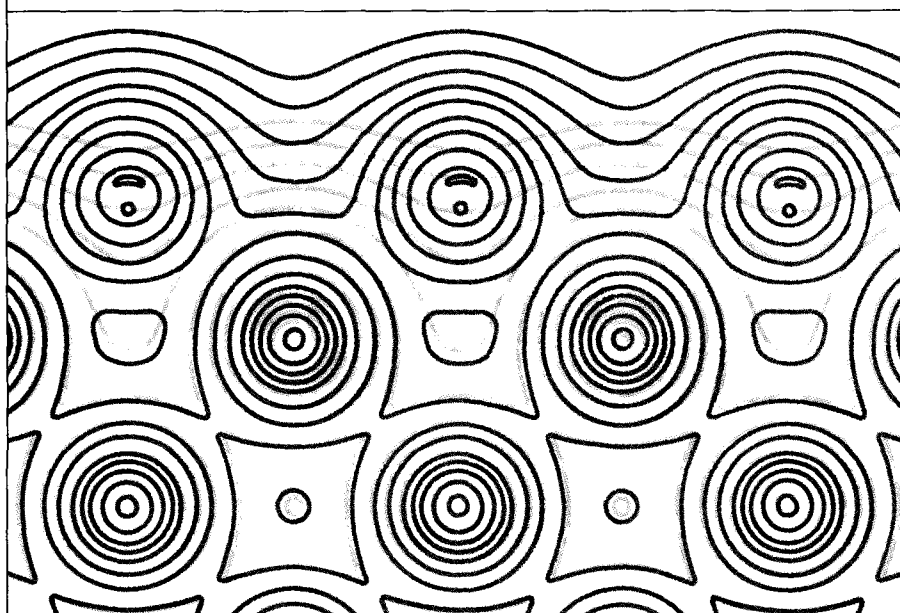


Figure 1: Energy distribution of electrons in outermost atomic layer. Red area indicates electrons in surface states.

Figure 2: Two electron density contour maps of the cross-section of a Cu(100) surface. One map shows a clean copper surface (tan); the other shows a nitrogen-covered copper surface (green).



CONVENTIONAL scientific thought treats virtually all of the valence electrons found in the surface atomic layer of a metal as if they are free to roam throughout the metal's interior. The work of three physicists at the General Motors Research Laboratories suggests otherwise. Through calculations confirmed by experimental data, the theorists have shown that more than a quarter of the valence electrons in the top atomic layer of some metals are effectively trapped in the surface. The presence of so many "surface state" electrons must be considered when analyzing physical and chemical surface phenomena, including such surface events as oxidation leading to corrosion.

Drs. John Smith, Jack Gay and Frank Arlinghaus applied their theoretical analysis to the (100) surface of five metals: copper, nickel, silver, rhodium and palladium. They made bold predictions concerning the percentage of electrons in the surface atomic layer to be found in surface states: Cu(36%), Ni(23%), Ag(23%), Rh(23%) and Pd(19%). The ratio of the red area to the hatched area of figure 1 gives the percentage for copper.

Electrons in surface states are not only abundant, but also highly localized on the surface. Chemisorption on a metal is also confined to the surface region. Figure 2 shows what happens in the case of nitrogen chemisorbed on copper. The two contour maps coincide except in the surface layer, where the interaction is largely exhibited. Localization of the interaction holds for the chemisorption of other gases, including oxygen in the initial stage of metal oxidation. These observations led the physicists to conclude that surface states are important in chemisorption.

One way to probe electrons in surfaces is to chemisorb atoms on a clean metal surface and look for changes in photoemission spectra. Such an experiment was performed at GM for fractional monolayers of nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur on Cu(100). The dominant change in the photoemission spectrum was the disappearance of a large peak whose shape and en-

ergy location was independent of the chemisorbed atom. It was of special interest that the shape and energy location of this peak was nearly identical to the envelope around the surface state peaks in figure 1. This suggests that surface state electrons play a major role in the chemisorption process.

THE THEORETICAL advance at the heart of the discovery is the "Self-Consistent Local Orbital (SCLO) Method" for solving the Schrödinger equation. This new mathematical method was devised by the GM theorists to handle the classic dilemma posed by the self-consistency requirement. The characterization of electron behavior used to complete the equation must be consistent with the behavior predicted by the equation. In other words, one almost needs to know the answer in order to make the calculation.

Self-consistent solution of the equation for a metal surface is made exceedingly difficult by the three-dimensional nature of the electron density distribution. The theorists dealt with this challenge successfully by dividing the electron density distribution into two parts—the first part due to overlapping atomic density distributions; the second part equaling the difference between this atomic contribution and the exact density distribution.

One of the more stringent tests of the accuracy of the SCLO method was an angular photoemission experiment conducted by Heimann et al. at the University of Munich, subsequent to publication of the GM research. The German research team confirmed a prominent surface state band predicted by the three GM physicists. This was the first time a surface state band on a solid had been calculated prior to its being seen experimentally. The SCLO method makes possible something that could not be done before—accurate prediction of the actual behavior of electrons whirling around nuclei at the surface of a metal.

"The large body of surface states we found on metal surfaces," says Dr. Smith, "may be a controlling factor in many physical and chemical surface phenomena. By replacing conjecture with calculation, the new surface theoretical methods give us the means to make major steps forward in the analysis of surface and interface properties."

THE MEN BEHIND THE WORK

Drs. Smith, Gay and Arlinghaus are theorists in the Physics Department at the General Motors Research Laboratories.



John Smith (center) and Jack Gay (right) received doctorates in physics; Smith from Ohio State University and Gay from the University of Florida. Frank Arlinghaus received his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

John Smith, leader of the GM solid state physics group, did postdoctoral work at the University of California in La Jolla. He joined General Motors in 1972. Frank Arlinghaus and Jack Gay joined the corporation in 1964 and 1965, respectively.

Each member of the team brings to the project a different expertise: Smith in surface physics, Gay in solid state theory, and Arlinghaus in bulk band structure calculations.



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Pruning the Paper Pile

There's a commercial on TV plugging the services of an air express company. It shows an office worker being swept along a corridor by an avalanche of paper as his co-workers duck into their cubicles to avoid being bowled over by the onrushing mass.

The commercial is intended to dramatize the problem of coping with the pileup of paper in a modern business office. (No small problem, we can aver.) Such an inundation, however, is as nothing compared to the load of paperwork the federal government heaps on businesses large and small, state and local governments, and everyday citizens — at substantial cost to all.

Forms, forms everywhere. Ah, but there's good news today. The paper pile is being pruned.

The battle against federal paperwork is being waged under terms of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The law was enacted during the Carter Administration and is now being implemented and enforced by the Reagan Administration. Spearheading the battle is the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. From the front lines along the Potomac, OMB reports ground gained.

Last year federal paperwork was slashed 13%, or by nearly 200 million of what OMB calls "burden hours" ... a "burden hour" being one hour's paperwork by one person. The cutback is equivalent to 95,000 work-years. It amounts to over one hour saved for every man and woman in the U.S., OMB notes.

The trimming reflects some good old-fashioned horse sense:

- a revision of program-logging rules for radio stations, the rules having been issued originally to monitor program content;
- adoption of a common medical claim form for use by Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance companies;
- cutting back to a single page a multi-page quarterly tax form issued by the Internal Revenue Service for use by employers;
- revising the requirements for truck drivers' daily logs and exempting certain drivers from the logging requirement.

With the consolidation of 57 federal grant programs into nine new block grants, the required paperwork will be reduced this year by 83%, or 5.4 million work hours.

Further cuts in paperwork will be tougher to make. That's because so much of it is linked to deeply entrenched procedures and programs. In some cases, new legislation will be required to ease the load.

OMB's paper-cutters are making heartening headway. Let's hope they'll carry on the fight against governmental paper flow with redoubled zeal.



*Why governments don't do what they could
to reduce violent crime*

THE POLITICS OF CRIME

BY RICHARD NEELY

THROUGH AT LEAST THE PAST decade, no public problem has worried Americans more persistently than crime. When people are asked in opinion surveys to list the problems that concern them most, the threat of crime typically comes at or near the top of the list. But when the same people list the issues on which they'll decide which candidate to vote for, crime usually comes behind half-a-dozen other subjects. The explanation they offer most frequently is that a candidate's statements about crime are unimportant—no one can do much about the problem.

What is misguided about this attitude is that it is possible to do something about crime. Although the evidence lacks scientific precision, certain facts of criminal-law enforcement are clear:

In many big cities, where the limit on crime is the presence of the police (as opposed to family members, watchful neighbors, and the like, who limit crime elsewhere), more officers on the streets or in the subways means fewer criminals who dare to act. But in courtrooms, most accused criminals go free because the system cannot afford to have it any other way. Everyone involved in the criminal courts is overtaxed, from the policemen, who must take time off the beat to testify, to the prosecutors, who need to dispose of cases as quickly as possible, to the judges, who know as they make their sentencing decisions that the prisons are already overcrowded. The result of this pressure is the plea-bargain, in which a man who faces, for example, a ten-year sentence with a three-year minimum term if convicted of armed robbery will instead plead guilty to grand larceny and end up serving one year in jail.

Many people complain that plea-bargaining returns criminals to the streets, but few have considered the sta-



tistics that lie behind this practice. There are nearly 104,000 felony arrests in New York City every year. New York City has facilities for only about 5,000 full-blown jury trials per year, so it is forced to do what nearly all city courts must: find some way to dispose of the surplus, usually through plea-bargaining or dropped charges. Many of the people thereby freed undoubtedly belong in jail, and the crime rate would undoubtedly fall if they were imprisoned. All that is required is money—for police, prosecutors, judges, and jails.

Why, then, have we not taken steps we know would have some effect? The answers are complicated, but chief among them is that for every proposal that might be made to reduce crime, there is a powerful, organized interest that opposes it. These obstructive groups often include the most influential force of all, the middle-class interests that so frequently complain about the threat of crime.

This problem is intimately connected with the general difficulties of American courts, but not the courts as they are usually conceived. When lay people speak of the courts, they often mean judges and attendant judicial staffs of clerks and secretaries. However, the term "courts" must be expanded when we talk of criminal law to encompass all of the supporting agencies that either feed criminals to the judges or receive them after conviction. When courts are understood in this way, it becomes clear that improving their operations can be costly. Doubling the number of policemen and prosecutors would spare many people the costs they now bear as victims of crime, but it would increase the costs many others would pay in taxes.

As is often the case, the people who stand to gain the most from this protection are the ones with the least say about how public money is spent. The primary victims of crime pay the lowest taxes. Most victims of crime live in ghettos or declining working-class neighborhoods, and they work at low-wage jobs in places such as all-night diners or gas stations, which are easy to rob. But the taxpay-

Richard Neely was elected a justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals in 1972. In 1980, he served as the state's chief justice. He is a graduate of the Yale Law School, a former member of the West Virginia Legislature, and the author of How Courts Govern America.

ers who would bear the cost of better protection for these victims are themselves seldom victims—they are instead large corporations with privately retained security forces, or middle-class taxpayers who live in well-protected neighborhoods and send their children to safe neighborhood schools or private schools.

Although it might not seem in the interest of the middle class to pay for increased enforcement, the cost of crime in the United States runs to hundreds of billions of dollars every year—much more than increased enforcement would cost. Shoplifting alone accounts for a loss of between 3 and 7 percent of all merchandise inventoried for sale by large chain stores, which means we all pay 3 to 7 percent more for our routine dry-goods purchases.

Moreover, criminal courts and their supporting agencies—unlike most government operations—actually generate revenue. At the simplest level, traffic courts and magistrate courts make more money from fees and fines than it costs to operate them. When state or local business regulations are enforced, the fines augment the treasury. Low crime rates also contribute to a desirable climate for industry, commerce, and residences, which in turn means higher property values and a stronger tax base. Lack of funding for the courts must be something more than just a reflection of overall budget constraints; while budget considerations do play a part, underfunding is often deliberate, purposeful, and unrelated to the budget.

One simple example should illustrate the point. Cheating on federal and state income taxes is pervasive in all classes of society; except among the compulsively honest, cheating usually occurs in direct proportion to opportunity. Why, then, do we not expand the Internal Revenue Service and its state counterparts? Every new revenue agent pays his salary and overhead at least eight times. The answer is that we do not really want Rhadamanthine enforcement of the tax laws. As long as the IRS is overworked and understaffed, everyone except the scrupulously honest will enact his own personal tax-reform program. The IRS's understaffing also guarantees that all but the most flagrant evaders will escape with a payment of back taxes and possibly a civil penalty.

Overworked United States attorneys cannot spend their time arguing every questionable deduction in tax court. The IRS will challenge a businessman's deductions, only to cede most of its points at settlement conferences. The mediocre enforcement of the tax codes stems not only from the IRS's lack of staff but also from a lack of U.S. attorneys, U.S. district court judges, and court-of-appeals judges. Without an increase in the personnel of supporting agencies, there is a limit to the effectiveness of new IRS agents, but there is no question that such an increase will bring in more money than it costs.

Since more rigorous enforcement will inspire a higher level of "voluntary" compliance, it must be obvious that some people out there do not want better enforcement. I am probably one. I actually do pay every cent I owe in

taxes, and since I am a public official, I get audited about every four years. Notwithstanding my annoyance with those who cheat, I do not want to be audited more than once every four years, because it is a nuisance. Quite frankly, I prefer to let my neighbor cheat a little rather than be bothered with a yearly audit.

Most people probably feel as I do about forgiving their neighbors' tax trespasses in return for minimal personal harassment by Uncle Sam, but a similar philosophy of live and let live does not exist about violent crime. Why, then, do we not double the number of cops and courts?

The reason is both ideological and financial. Policemen, in my experience, are by nature bullies as well as heroes, and the smaller the police force, the more policemen tend to exhibit the characteristics of heroes rather than bullies. But the more policemen who are "cracking down on crime," the greater the likelihood that individual citizens will suffer abuse of their civil liberties. Work in any bureaucracy tends to expand to fill the time allocated to do it. If the police are not busy with serious crime, they may meddle in such citizen activities as private poker games, where no one wants their help. Consequently, a silent, even unconscious alliance exists between pro-civil-liberties liberals, who want small police forces for ideological reasons, and conservative taxpayers, who do not want to pay the costs of what from their point of view amounts to social services for others.

My favorite illustration of the diverse alliances that oppose improvements in the criminal-justice system is the repeated failure of a bill that is perennially introduced in the West Virginia Legislature. The bill, which is introduced at the request of the state attorney general, would give the attorney general statewide prosecutorial powers. Under the current system, each West Virginia county elects a prosecutor who has absolute discretion concerning what crimes will be prosecuted in his county. The attorney general handles criminal cases on appeal, defends the state's interests in federal habeas corpus proceedings, and represents the state's agencies in civil litigation; however, the attorney general has no power to initiate prosecutions at the trial-court level in the fifty-five counties. Why should there not be a statewide prosecutorial agency, particularly since many local prosecutors are reluctant to enforce the law against their political friends?

The answer is quite simple. The position of attorney general has historically been a stepping-stone to the governorship. Since 1936, four out of ten governors held the office of attorney general immediately before their election as governor. High elected office has tended to go to media stars since the demise of well-organized political machines. Only certain types of political antics, however, attract media attention; these include crusades against political corruption and white-collar crime. Everyone who is actively involved in either business or government is aware of the public-relations value of an anti-corruption crusade, yet even the consummately honest prefer not to be bothered

by one. Zealous investigations demand the production of documents, testimony by employees on company time, and a costly disruption of normal business operations. None of these costs is borne by the government; all must be borne by the private sector.

The important facts are that there is less than universal support for the enforcement of most laws, from consumer fraud to drug use, and that lack of consensus about the value of some types of law enforcement is seen in the legislature's failure to establish a statewide enforcement agency.

In West Virginia's four northernmost counties, the population is composed largely of the children of Italians, Greeks, Poles, Hungarians, and other non-Anglo-Saxon peoples. The biggest illegal gambling institutions used to be the churches, which held regular, illegal bingo parties and raised significant revenues (bingo games for charitable organizations were recently legalized). Other social institutions similarly rely on slot machines and football pools; it is a way of life completely different from that of the predominantly fundamentalist southern part of the state. Local prosecutors in those counties are elected by citizens who expect a policy of conspicuous non-enforcement of the gambling laws, at least as they apply to churches and social clubs. The last thing on earth they want is a statewide strike force destroying their churches and clubs.

In 1977, when John D. Rockefeller IV became governor, his new chief of the state police attempted to enforce the gambling laws in the northern counties. Within a month, the state police were instructed to back off, because it became obvious that continued enforcement would anger every member of the legislature from those counties and that, in retaliation, those legislators would torpedo the governor's legislative program.

EVERY EFFORT AT IMPROVEMENT IN THE CRIMINAL justice system will seem either helpful or threatening, depending on the perspective of some political-interest group. Thus an increase in the number of policemen means more protection to some, more bullying to others. If, for example, the staffs of prosecuting attorneys are increased so that they can diligently prosecute armed robbers, murderers, and dope peddlers, they will also be available to ferret out consumer fraud, anti-trust violations, and political corruption. Since prosecuting attorneys are usually elected and, therefore, are lawyers with political ambitions, they will be tempted, as in West Virginia, to play to the press by prosecuting white-collar crime. These

campaigns are middle-class morality plays that assuage the newspaper reader's sense of unrecognized merit. They are usually less attractive to the political establishment, however resolute it may be about cracking down on murder and armed robbery. Even firebrand political reformers use questionable tactics at election time, and the prospect of an elaborate enforcement bureaucracy falling into enemy hands is horrifying to politicians.

A classic example of frivolous white-collar-crime prosecution took place recently in Pittsburgh. A county commissioner, who was also the county Democratic Party chairman, was charged with theft of services during his tenure as county coroner. At that time, in addition to being coroner, he owned a private laboratory, which did pathology and toxicology testing. It was alleged that he brought tissue specimens from his lab to the morgue, where they were processed by morgue employees on the county payroll, thereby "stealing" \$115,000 worth of county services.

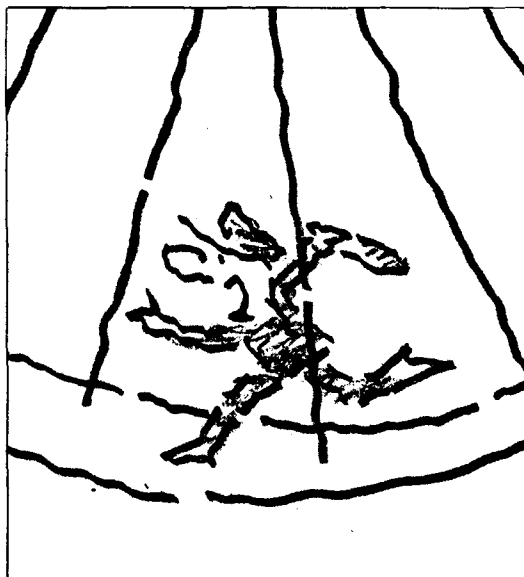
The case had all the trappings of a political trial. The defendant, Cyril H. Wecht, was highly placed in county politics; so prosecuting him would bring much publicity—

adverse for Wecht, angelic for the prosecutor. Wecht had political enemies even within his own party, and some of them were involved in initiating and developing the investigation. Others used the investigation and trial as a reason to force him to withdraw from the party chairmanship. And the district attorney responsible for the prosecution, perhaps trading on the publicity it generated, was running for the state supreme court bench at the same time.

Political or not, theft of government services is not a trivial charge. But this case certainly was not one of those occasions when an expensive jury trial was warranted by any cost-benefit analysis of the "public good." Fortunately for Wecht, he was able to hire the nationally known trial lawyer Stanley Preiser to defend him. After six weeks of exhaustive testimony and with thirty-two cartons of documentary evidence, the jury deliberated for ten hours and acquitted Wecht.

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The investigation and trial took nearly two years and involved ten investigators and seven lawyers from the district attorney's office at one time or another. The trial lasted six weeks, and the whole affair was estimated to have cost the county about \$1.5 million—more than ten times the value of the services said to have been stolen. The money spent on the trial could have bought almost forty prosecutors for a year at an annual salary of \$40,000, and they each could have been prosecuting fifty violent crimes and property crimes such as murder, rape, arson,



armed robbery, and larceny—the ones that affect the average citizen's life.

As long as we are talking only about the criminal courts, the questions are comparatively simple. But when we add the complications created by the civil courts, all bets are off. Devoting more money to the *criminal* courts would return economic dividends to the public, but increased funding for the entire court system has a much more mixed effect. Indeed, for certain groups, including local governments, businesses, unions, landlords, and even tenants, a better-functioning court system would be a calamity.

Consider the case of New York City, which is notorious for its long court delays. In the abstract, most New Yorkers would like to have an efficient court system so that criminals would be sent away. To the casual observer, New York's felon problem would appear easy to solve by increasing the number of policemen and prosecutors, and by expanding the court system.

The hitch, however, is that a New York trial-court judge is empowered to hear both criminal and civil cases; if the number of judges is increased, more civil cases can be heard. Of 25,589 civil cases concluded in New York City in the first forty weeks of the 1979-1980 fiscal year, 5,523 were against New York City itself. New York City has been on the verge of bankruptcy since 1975, and the policies of the Reagan Administration threaten even greater financial strains in the next two and a half years. The potential liability for New York City from the civil suits currently awaiting trial runs to billions of dollars. New York City cannot afford an efficient court system, because it would be bankrupt beyond bail-out if all these suits came to trial in one or two years.

New York is an extraordinary example, but legal-aid and other public-interest lawyers elsewhere are bringing suits challenging the standards of operation in mental hospitals, prisons, schools, and other state and local facilities. When courts take action in these areas, it can mean that local governments must spend millions or even billions of dollars they never planned to. In New Jersey, for example, the state supreme court ordered the legislature to enact an income tax to support the public schools. This required the allocation of state money to projects that judges wanted rather than to projects that the governor and the legislators wanted.

The moral of these stories is that the costs of creating more courts, along with all their supporting staff, are but a fraction of the total amount of money that an expansion of the courts will eventually involve. Typically, the entire judicial branch of government takes less than 2 percent of any state's budget. In New York City, the cost of doubling the number of judges, prosecutors, city attorneys, courtrooms, and supporting staff would be small compared with the cost of paying the judgments the new courts would render against the city.

In other parts of the United States, there are powerful private interests in the same position as New York City:

they are not in the least interested in improving the efficiency of civil courts. If, for instance, litigation against insurance companies takes eight years to complete, the company has the use of its money for eight years, and can invest it during that period at between 10 and 18 percent. Furthermore, delay alone is a powerful force to inspire settlements for low sums. Since most federal and state courts are unified criminal and civil tribunals, in which any judge can hear either type of case, the positive economic effect for the general public of improved criminal courts is almost always offset by increased costs on the civil side for those who have the most political power. The public takes its accustomed beating.

IF EXPANDING THE COURTS HAS VARIED EFFECTS, SOME of them welcomed and some of them abhorred by powerful political groups, the logical solution would be to separate the courts' various functions. We might create institutions that would work in areas where there is broad agreement—such as fighting violent crime—while avoiding other areas. Everyone wants violent criminals prosecuted and the streets made safe. During the 1960s and 1970s, there were numerous programs that attempted to get at the root causes of crime—slums, broken families, unemployment. While we have not abandoned these efforts, there is an increasing awareness that we do not have either the resources or the knowledge to reduce violent crime through preventive means, and this lack should not be used as an excuse for doing nothing.

New institutions will not be developed, however, until there is an organized citizen lobby that makes campaign contributions, sends out direct-mail newsletters about how elected officials perform in the area of court reform, and has representatives entering into the give-and-take of political bargaining in the committee rooms and the corridors of legislatures. Until there is such a lobby around which political support can coalesce, politically workable plans will not be generated. Since there is no active citizen lobby for court reform, and since, to the contrary, all of the day-to-day political rewards go to those who oppose court reform, the legislative branch is entirely indifferent to the courts. In fact, I cannot think of any other subject of major social concern that intrudes itself less upon the imagination of the average legislator than the courts. Yet court reform, albeit in simplistic terms, is the frequent subject of campaign rhetoric, which gives the illusion that politicians have some continuing interest in the subject. Sadly, the courts are usually regarded in the same light as is the Federal Reserve Board—as an institution that is to be reviled and attacked but ultimately to be left unchanged.

The history of the environmental movement suggests the direction that a citizens' movement could take. Environmental and conservation issues used to be as low a legislative priority as court reform is today. But in the early

1960s, the whole question of pollution control and conservation of unspoiled wilderness captured the imagination of the college-educated middle class. Suddenly, defense of the environment took on the aura of a religious crusade. Groups such as the Sierra Club organized on the national level, and in every state local groups developed and kept in communication with one another.

The reform of the criminal law may be ripe for the same type of crusade that the environmentalists led fifteen years ago. Most street crime is, to be sure, perpetrated upon the poor, because they must live where the criminals are. But crime has risen to a level that intrudes itself into the lives of many middle-class citizens on a daily basis. It is the middle class that has organizational and political skills, along with a spare hundred dollars to contribute to a political-action group. It was essentially the middle class that accomplished the environmental revolution.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A CITIZEN lobby for better law enforcement can already be perceived. In West Virginia last year, the relatives of persons killed by drunk drivers organized themselves to make the drunk-driving penalties more severe. In general, the enforcement of the drunk-driving laws in the United States is a disgrace. But last year, the public outcry against drunk drivers was such that the West Virginia Legislature made drunk driving a serious offense, amending the law to include a no-nonsense procedure for enforcement.

West Virginia's decision to crack down on drunk driving was not unique; several other states amended their laws last year with spectacular results. In California, for example, after a new drunk-driving law went into effect, the highway death toll during the Christmas season was reduced by 50 percent over the previous year.

Drunk driving differs from other criminal questions in that it is a comparatively easily understood problem and there is no political pressure to protect drunk drivers. Although there is no pressure to protect any criminal who strikes at random, the more a criminal activity looks like a regular business—car theft, gambling, drug sales—the more criminals organize to influence the political process. Even more important in the passage of the drunk-driving laws, perhaps, was the lack of debate about what would reduce drunk driving. Everyone agreed that strict sanctions, quickly applied, would do the trick for the occasional drunk, and that permanent revocation of their licenses would keep most of the habitual drunks off the road. Like

the environmental movement, the lobby against drunk driving knew just what it wanted.

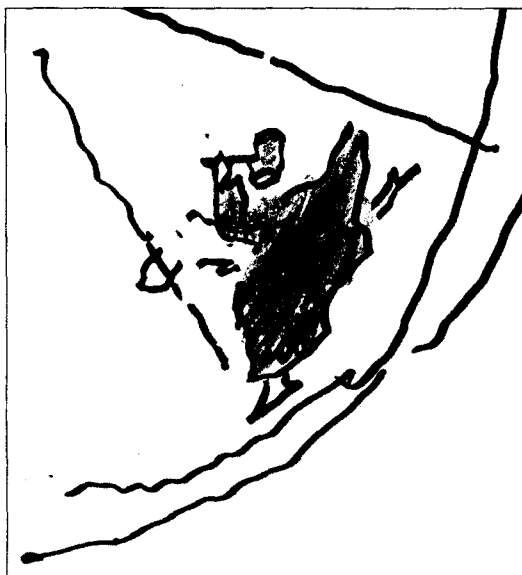
By contrast, efforts within the political system to improve the criminal-justice system often stall because of the timeless debate about stricter enforcement versus elimination of the root causes of crime. The advantage of a citizen lobby seriously concerned with an improved criminal-justice system is that citizens want protection—they are content if the symptoms of the disease can be controlled, and that is probably the practical approach for the foreseeable future.

It is important to differentiate between traditional law-and-order rhetoric and real criminal-law reform. Traditional law-and-order rhetoric addresses itself primarily to the decisions of the United States Supreme Court since *Miranda v. Arizona* in 1966, when the Supreme Court began the wholesale reform of the criminal law in order to further civil rights and civil liberties. A return to police brutality, official harassment of the lower socio-economic class, and kangaroo-court summary convictions by forced guilty pleas is not my idea of criminal-law reform. It is possible to have a well-

functioning system of criminal-law enforcement without the violations of personal integrity inherent in the police state. But it would be expensive.

In my estimation, a good criminal-justice system that reduces violent and petty crime to roughly one fifth of their current level could be established with substantially less political activism than was required for environmental reform. Furthermore, the costs to the nation of criminal-law reform would be dramatically less than those of the environmental movement, although they would *all* be borne directly by the taxpayers instead of being paid for through the inflation of consumer prices, as was the case with most environmental reforms. Cleaning up the environment exacted its costs through lost jobs, higher utility bills, and more expensive automobiles. Criminal-law reform will cost higher taxes.

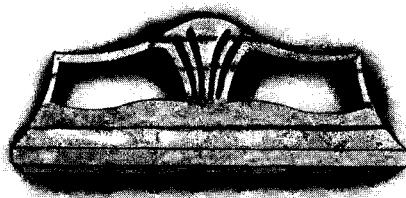
It is not necessary that everyone suddenly become interested in criminal-law reform. After all, the number of voters who were actively dedicated to the ecology revolution was comparatively small. Extremely effective interest groups—the National Rifle Association, for example—are comparatively small in terms of active members. It must be remembered that politicians are not concerned with influencing everyone who is eligible to vote—just the 21 to 65 percent, depending on the election, who actually come to the polls. It is the militant and not the indifferent voter who must be satisfied first. □



Building Steinway grand piano K 2571

THE QUALITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

BY MICHAEL LENEHAN



THE STEINWAY & SONS PIANO COMPANY, FOUNDED in a Manhattan loft in 1853 by a German immigrant named Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg and his sons, is based today on a ten-acre factory site in the northwestern corner of Queens, New York, in the area commonly called Astoria. Steinway Creek connects the property with the Bowery Bay and the East River to the north. The office door opens onto Steinway Place, and just a block beyond is Steinway Street, one of the main thoroughfares of the neighborhood. From the factory's south windows, you can see a bus depot operated by the Steinway Transit Company, and if you walk up the block a bit you can visit Steinway Auto Body, the Steinway Electrical Supply Company, and the Steinway Homing Pigeon Club.

This section of Queens was mostly farmland when the family began buying and building there, in 1870, but under their influence—particularly that of William Steinway, one of the founder's five sons—it became a busy community of mostly German-born tradesmen and their families. After only twenty years in the United States, the Steinways had firmly established themselves as the country's—and, many would say, the world's—pre-eminent piano makers, and they were quick to take up the civic and commercial activities that went with the role of successful New World businessmen. For the children of their neighborhood they supplied a park, a kindergarten, and a library, and they subsidized the teaching of music and German—the common tongue of their factory—at the local public school. For the adults they built public baths and row houses for sale at agreeable terms. As commercial ventures, William Steinway, who dabbled in Democratic Party politics and claimed Grover Cleveland as a lifelong friend, brought to Astoria a ferry company, a streetcar line, and the Daimler Motor Company, an American licensee of the German firm that later made the Mercedes-Benz. Officially, the area was called Long Island City—as it is

today—but to the post office and the residents it was Steinway Village.

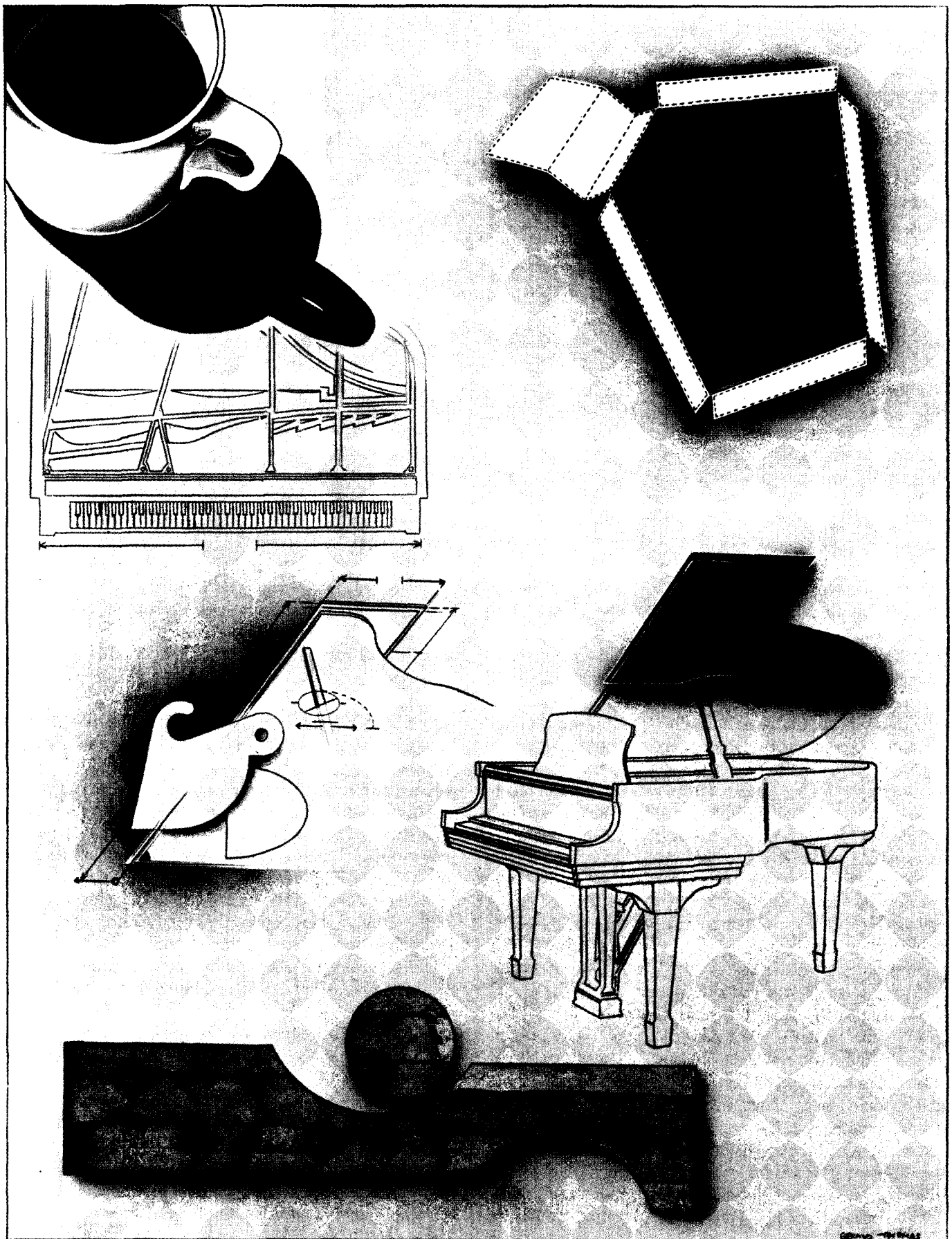
Little remains of William Steinway's sidelines in Astoria, and most of the land originally held by the family was sold long ago. The factory, once a model of efficient design and construction, is noisy, dirty, and poorly laid out by modern standards, and its neighborhood is sometimes smelly and often desolate. The company, once one of the largest of more than 250 American piano manufacturers, is now, in terms of unit volume, a relatively small concern in an industry dominated by giants: the New York factory produces about 3,400 pianos annually, less than 2 percent of the total U.S. market. (A branch factory, opened in Hamburg in 1880, produces another 1,900 yearly for the European market.) Held closely by the family for nearly 120 years, the corporation was sold in 1972 to CBS, whose musical-instruments division also produces Gemeinhardt flutes, Fender guitars, Rogers drums, and Lyon & Healy harps. When John H. Steinway, now sixty-five, great-grandson of the patriarch, retires as chairman of the board, he will leave Steinway & Sons in the hands of non-family members for the first time in its history.

Still, as the multitude of Steinways in the Queens telephone directory suggests, something lasting was established there in the nineteenth century, and much at Steinway & Sons remains the same. Henry Z. Steinway, John's older brother and his predecessor as board chairman, still serves the company as a consultant, working in offices above Steinway's showrooms on 57th Street in Manhattan, about a block away from Carnegie Hall. John Steinway, who may make a similar arrangement, can be found most days at his plain desk in the large, open office room adjacent to the factory, working in his shirtsleeves. One floor above him, draftsmen and engineers study drawings created by his forebears a century ago, and the piano produced out in the factory is essentially the same as the one with which the company revolutionized the industry in the 1860s and 1870s. Though the workers today come more

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERALD THOMAS

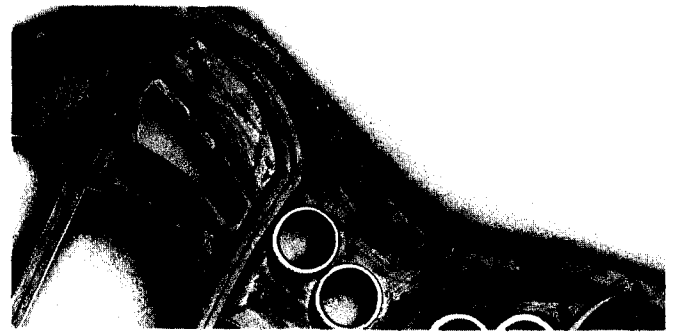
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often from the Third World than the Old World—Spanish is more likely to be heard in the lunchroom than German—and though many of them now work at huge, floor-rattling veneer presses and sanding machines instead of at quiet benches, they are still, like their predecessors, immigrants who came to New York to seek work for themselves and something better for their children. And, as some of the taxi drivers in Astoria will tell you, they still make what is known in many quarters as the finest piano in the world.

When I first visited the Steinway & Sons plant, on a hot, sticky morning last summer, Peter Perez, then the president of the company, took me on a hurried tour of the premises. I recall very little of the tour's middle parts, but I was struck dumb by its beginning and end—the lumberyard and the loading dock, where I saw essentially the same things I would have seen a hundred years before. The lumberyard, just outside the south wall of the factory complex, was a most unimpressive sight. Perez told me that I was looking at more than a million dollars' worth of wood from many faraway places, but all I saw was stack after stack of boards discolored by the elements; to my unschooled eye, they looked unfit for a little boy's treehouse. Seconds later, however—or so it seemed—I stood on the loading dock, at the north end of the factory, and there I beheld a Steinway model D, the eight-foot, eleven-and-three-quarter-inch, \$28,000 concert grand piano on which the company's coveted reputation rests. It seemed to me a sculpture. This was the model played by Josef Hofmann, Vladimir Horowitz, and countless other great artists. The pianist and historian Arthur Loesser, a man not given to syrupy enthusiasms, had once described its sound as "a tone that craved to stream out of itself, to blend with all other tone, to merge ecstatically into a universal ocean of tone." According to a much-repeated estimate made years ago, it comprised some 12,000 parts, from inch-long bits of maple to a 340-pound plate of cast iron. It had taken nearly a year to build and had passed through the hands of more than 200 workers. None of these facts, however, impressed me as much as the look of the thing: the sinuous curves of its open top, the bold diagonals of its bass strings; its satiny black lacquer, vivid red felt and cloth, brilliant white keys, and lustrous brass-colored metal. It reeked of quality. I marveled that it had been made from a pile of dusty, weather-beaten wood, and I returned the next day to see how it had been done.

On August 21, 1981, I went to the fourth floor of the plant to meet a few parts: a rim that had been constructed in early February; a soundboard that had been finished in June; a cast-iron plate that had been delivered from a foundry in Ohio at about the same time. A model D—its name would be K 2571—was about to be constructed from these parts and thousands of others, and I planned to attend the creation. A supervisor on the floor heard of my intention and amused himself with it. He made a few quick mental calculations and announced, grinning, "You'll be with us for Christmas!" I was.



WOOD, GLUE, AND A LARGE HUNK OF METAL

THE WOOD THAT IS TRANSFORMED INTO A STEINWAY model D is of several different kinds, each with its own characteristics and purposes. Yellow poplar, which is soft and relatively cheap, is used as the "core wood" of such flat, tablelike parts as the piano's top; it is veneered with mahogany to give an attractive appearance. Maple is used where extreme hardness is necessary—for example, in the pin block, also called the wrest plank, which must hold the tuning pins tight against the tension of the strings, and in the action, whose hundreds of tiny moving parts must be machined to precise tolerances. Sitka spruce, light in weight and high in strength, is used for structural cross braces; also, because it has long, parallel fibers that vibrate freely, it is used in the soundboard, the thin panel inside the case that amplifies the vibrations of the strings and projects their sound into the air.

Before these woods can begin their year-long journey through the factory, they must wait outside, drying and curing, for nine months or more. Warren Albrecht, Steinway's lumber buyer and wood technologist, told me that some of the lumber arriving in the yard is actually up to 80 percent water. The water has to go. Wood expands and contracts as it takes on and loses moisture; before being fashioned into parts that will fit together, it must be dried to a water content of about 6 percent, to minimize the possible changes in dimension. Breathing the New York air for several months is the first of two drying steps; despite rain and snow, this reduces the wood's water content to about 25 percent. Wringing out the remainder usually requires several weeks of kiln drying, in cavernous rooms where temperatures of up to 160 degrees Fahrenheit shrink the lumber to about nine-tenths of its original volume. I asked Albrecht to take me into one of the kilns, but found standing for a few seconds at the open door of one quite sufficient to satisfy my curiosity.

After drying, the wood goes to the crosscut department, on the first floor of the factory, to be prepared for the woodworkers. Here the discolored surfaces are planed away—the wood looks new again. Boards are cut to convenient lengths according to their destinies, and all sections containing knots and other intolerable imperfections are thrown on the scrap heap. Another third of the lumber's

original volume is lost in this way. Along with the cuttings, shavings, and sawdust produced elsewhere in the factory, the scrap goes into a wood-burning boiler that supplements the plant's conventional oil furnace. All told, as much as 60 percent of the lumber Steinway buys either evaporates or goes up in smoke. The rest goes into pianos.

In various departments on the first and second floors of the factory, the wood is transformed from boards into rough approximations of piano parts. A naïf in the ways of woodworking, I found in these departments the answers to questions I had never thought of asking. For example: Given that maple trees grow up and down, as a rule, how does one obtain the curvaceous contours of a grand piano's rim? If the top of a piano measures roughly sixty inches at its widest point, does one need a five-foot-thick poplar tree to make it? If birch, the wood from which piano legs are carved, is generally available in the form of boards no more than three inches thick, whence come the blocky chunks of wood with which the carvers start?

In a word, the answer to these questions is glue. The block from which a model-D leg is carved is made of two pieces of birch glued together. The large sheet of poplar that becomes a top is simply fifteen to twenty boards glued together along their lengths. Much of the gluing is done on gangly "glue wheels," which look vaguely like giant metal Rolodexes; their "cards," a dozen or so per wheel, are clamp assemblies that hold the pieces of wood in place while the glue sets. The blocks and panels that result are slapdash—irregularly shaped, and patterned with streams of hardened excess glue—but when they have been planed and sanded the seams virtually disappear, and the pieces look almost as if they had been cut whole from oversize trees.

Having heard comments around the factory about the difficulty of obtaining wood in convenient sizes, I asked Warren Albrecht if this gluing of blocks and panels was a traditional woodworking practice or a new one made necessary by the limited sizes in which lumber is available today. He answered that it was a little bit of both. "We don't have the selection of trees we used to have, because trees of the quality we need take, let's say, a hundred years to grow to full size; they don't grow them to full size anymore. So the boards are getting narrower, and we probably have to put more boards in a panel than we used to. But woodworkers have pretty much always glued up panels. The concept itself, I guess, has been around for the entire history of the piano. You have to do it, for certain items."

Albrecht went on to correct the mistaken assumption implied in my question: that a built-up block or panel is weaker, less stable, or somehow inferior to a piece of wood cut solid from a log. "The glue is stronger than the wood," he said. "If you do a proper job of gluing a panel and then try to break that panel, you'll find the wood is going to break rather than the glue joint. Gluing also helps because any one board might have a tendency to, say, shrink or

swell more than another board. By putting boards of varying characteristics together, you can compensate. You'll get an overall average of stability."

The most difficult gluing job in the creation of a Steinway—and the most spectacular, a favorite on the factory visitors' tour—is the construction of the rim. Actually there are two rims: the outer rim, the piano's exterior wall; and the inner rim, a shallower interior wall that forms a ledge to which the cast-iron plate and the soundboard are attached. Most piano makers build the two rims separately: they make the inner rim first, build the piano's works onto it, and then glue the outer rim around it. Steinway builds the inner and outer rims together, as a single piece, which makes for stronger, more integral construction, perhaps a better sound, and certainly a lot more work.

The rim begins as quarter-inch-thick slats of maple, which arrive at the lumberyard in various lengths and widths, none of them appropriate to the task. Some of the slats must be "paneled," or glued along their lengths, to a width of about twelve and one-half inches—the approximate depth of the model D's outer rim. Others must be "ripped," or sawed along their lengths, to about half that width—the inner rim. Boards of like width are glued and tongue-jointed to a length of twenty-two feet, which is roughly the measure of the piano's perimeter from the bass side around to the treble. (There is no left and right in a piano factory, only bass and treble.) Typically, a "book" of boards—one rim's worth—consists of nine narrow maple boards, five wider ones, and four layers of other types added for strength and decoration. At this point the rim wood is about 10 percent water instead of the usual 6. The extra moisture is needed for pliability, because the eighteen layers of wood, some three and one-half inches thick in all, are about to be coerced—bent, shoved, and grunted over—into the impossible curves that make up the shape of a grand piano. Not one at a time, but all at once.

This happens in a large basement room where eight massive piano-shaped forms of steel, their perimeters fitted with gargantuan screws and clamps, stand along two walls almost like instruments in a showroom. These are rim-bending presses, the tools of the maple's fate. The model-D press goes into service most mornings at 9:45, when the rim-department crew returns from its coffee break. As a special precaution—one of many taken throughout the factory for the model D—one man stays behind at break time to mix a new batch of urea-resin glue, which is most effective when it is fresh. This is done because the D rim is the largest Steinway makes—and therefore the most susceptible to failure—and because the model D is the flagship of the Steinway line. Not that it happens, but if the rim of a baby grand model S were to spring apart at the seams one day, it would most likely be in the living room of a kindly old music teacher somewhere in the Midwest; if a model D were to come unglued, it might be on the stage of Carnegie Hall.

The crew of six, some with glue buckets, rags, and

brushes in hand, line up in single file along a narrow bench about two feet high. At one end of this bench is an automatic glue applicator, a wringer-like machine through which the department's foreman, Ralph D'Alleva, feeds the wooden layers one at a time. The long boards have been scored on both sides to give the best possible gluing surface. They have also been arranged so that the "inside" of one board—the side that grew closest to the center of the tree—faces the "outside" of the next; each layer will thus counteract the warping tendency of its neighbor. As each board emerges from the gluing machine, the workers line it up on the bench. Some spread glue over spots the machine has missed, and one cleans excess glue with a wet rag. D'Alleva yells "Glue!" and a man appears at his side with a bucket, emptying it into the machine. The work is hurried. Once the glue is applied, the crew has twenty minutes to get the wood clamped into the press. In the old days, when they used hot glue made from animal matter, they had even less time.

Within a few minutes, the "book" has been assembled and aligned on the bench, the wider layers of the outer rim on top. Now the crewmen, protecting their hands with thick sheets of sandpaper, lift the heavy mass of wood and struggle hurriedly with it to the press. Starting at the front, or keyboard end, of the piano, they lay and clamp the book first along the straight bass side of the press—the easy part. Next, however, comes an extremely difficult part, the virtual ninety-degree bend at the back. D'Alleva says, "All right, start movin'," and there follows a flurry of heaving, shoving, and pulling against the wood's desire to remain straight. A few men apply clamps and tighten screws with T-bars bigger than tire irons. Another evens the layers with a block of wood, setting it against their edges and pounding it from above with a large hammer. The block he uses is itself a section cut from an old laminated rim—a reminder, perhaps, that this crazy process will really work, that the wood will stay in place once the glue dries.

The wood's resistance increases as the men wrap it around to the treble side of the press. One of the crew takes up a wooden lever about five feet tall, shaped roughly like a lowercase letter *b*, and, as a couple of others pull the last section of rim into place with a block and tackle, he and a few mates apply the bulbous end of the lever against the wood and press it into the graceful curve near the front of the piano. They look remarkably like the Marines who raised the flag over Iwo Jima. "Push!" "Get it!" "Once more!" . . .

"Okay!" Suddenly, the frenzy subsides. The rebellious wood is locked safely in the press. A couple of crewmen casually tighten clamps, and the rest walk off to their next task.

The rim of K 2571 was bent in this fashion on February 6, 1981. The next workday, it was removed from the press, upended, and placed in a brace that kept its ends from flying out. It spent ten weeks in the humidity-controlled

rim-bending room, during which time the maple's water content was slowly reduced to about 6 percent. By then, the wood had "forgotten" its original shape. In April, it was taken to the frazing department, where workers sawed, planed, and sanded it to specifications, and from there it went to the case-making department, where cross braces, a key bed, and a pin block were installed. Now a "case" instead of a "rim," it went in June to the lacquer department, where, except for very rare special orders, each model D receives five coats of functional, basic black.

At about the same time the lacquering began on the fourth floor of the factory, a soundboard and a cast-iron plate were taking shape on the first and second floors. The soundboard's function is to amplify the sound of a slender string into a sound capable of filling a concert hall, and every detail of its construction is aimed at maximizing its ability to vibrate. The wood is an expensive grade of Sitka spruce, with no fewer than ten grains, or growth rings, per inch. It is sawed from the log so that its grain lines—and thus its vibrating fibers—run straight along the length of each board. The soundboard panel, made of about twenty boards glued together along their lengths, is thinned in places, like the face of a fine violin, to encourage movement. Finally, and most important, the board is made to bow out slightly in the center: the bridge, the long, snaky strip of laminated maple on which the strings will rest, is affixed to the top of the panel, and ribs are affixed to the underside, such that the board is distorted into a slight crown, increasing its ability to project sound waves into the air.

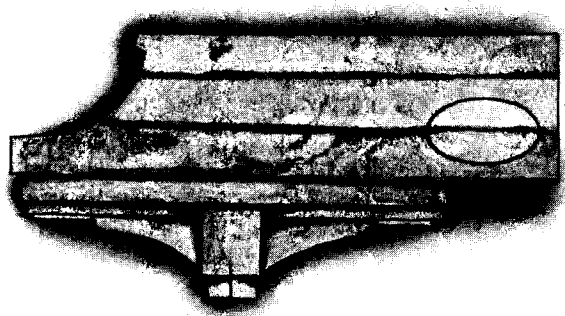
The cast-iron plate, made by the Wickham Piano Plate Company, of Springfield, Ohio, arrived at the factory an intricately shaped but roughly finished hunk of dull gray metal. Workers in the plate department, on the first floor of the factory, ground down its rough edges, smoothed its surface, painted it gold, and buffed it to a soft, brassy luster. Also, with the guidance of templates prepared and maintained by the engineering department—"patterns," they are called—they installed the pieces that would later determine the crucial placement of the strings: the agraffes, the guideposts through which the strings emerge at the front of the piano; and the hitch pins, around which they loop in the back.

The cast-iron plate embodies the two major design elements that propelled Steinway & Sons to the top of the piano business in the mid-1800s. One of these elements was the use of the plate itself, which permitted much higher string tension than could be borne by pianos made entirely of wood or of wood fortified with metal bars. The added strength allowed the use of bigger—and thus louder—strings. The second design element was the piano's "scale," which is essentially the arrangement of its strings—their vibrating lengths, their placement on the bridge, and the point at which they are struck by the hammers.

The most important feature of the new Steinway scale

was the "overstringing" technique, in which the bass strings, instead of running parallel to the others, are fanned over them diagonally in a second tier of strings; this permitted longer bass strings and, again, more volume. Neither of these design elements was radical: overstringing had been used in square pianos since the 1830s; the metal plate had been developed by the Boston piano maker Alpheus Babcock in the 1820s, and Jonas Chickering, also of Boston—the foremost American piano maker before the Steinways came along—had been using it in his grand pianos since the 1840s. The Steinways' masterstroke was to combine the two ideas in a new design, which also included heavier hammers to excite the heavier strings, a subtly improved action to permit control of the heavier hammers, and a repositioning of the bridge from the rear of the soundboard toward the middle.

The result was an instrument unlike any heard before. Hector Berlioz, encountering the Steinway at the international exposition of Paris in 1867, remarked not only on its "splendid and noble sonority" but on the ingenuity of its scaling, which subdued the "terrible resonance of the minor seventh," an undesirable overtone occasionally heard from other pianos of the time. The exposition's jurors were likewise impressed: even though none of them was an American (patriotism was often an important factor in these international trade shows), they awarded the Steinway their gold medal. Within a few years, the prestigious old piano houses of Europe were fading into obscurity, and the rest of the industry was quickly adopting what had come to be called the "American system" or "Steinway system" of piano design. Those terms are not used much today, because today there is no other system.



THE AMERICAN WAY

LIKE MANY THINGS CALLED "AMERICAN," THE AMERICAN system of piano making is rooted in another place entirely: the town of Seesen, in the Harz Mountains of central Germany. There, at least according to the family legend, Heinrich E. Steinweg, a cabinetmaker by trade, built his first piano as a spare-time project in the kitchen of his home, in 1836. Fourteen years later, when he sailed to the United States and became Henry E. Steinway, he was a rather atypical immigrant: fifty-three years

old, apparently prosperous, and so uninterested in the New World adventure that he refused to learn English. He must have come as much for his children's sake as for his own. That, at least, he shared with hundreds of men who would be employed by him and his heirs in the years to come.

John and Henry Steinway, the founder's great-grandsons, are probably the last piano makers in the line. I met them one morning at Steinway Hall, in Manhattan, to hear about the roots of the company that made them rich men. Henry, who since retiring has been trying to sort through family records and memorabilia, brought a large cardboard chart showing the Steinway genealogy. He started at the top, explaining what he knew of his great-grandfather's decision to come to America.

"What I think took place—and this is pure speculation based on no facts—is that they had a pretty successful piano-manufacturing business there in Seesen in the 1830s and '40s. And from what little I know of the history of Germany at that time, it was layered in small states. It was the town of Seesen within the duchy of Brunswick within the grand duchy of something else, and if you wanted to ship a piano a hundred miles you had to go through three tariffs to get it there. I think we like to say that leaving there was for freedom and all that. The hell it was. It was an economic decision. According to something I ran across somewhere here, the oldest son, Theodore, had filed some kind of papers that he wanted to emigrate in—I'm guessing—1845 or '46. And then he didn't go. But then Charles and Henry, the two next-younger brothers, did go. The family liked to tell the story that Charles left Germany because he was in that 1848 revolution, and was a liberal. I really don't think that's so. I think they were sent out to scout for a place to go. The conventional wisdom was that when Charles wrote back or came back—I guess he physically came back, but nobody knows for sure—he said that New York was the place, and the family made the decision to uproot themselves and sell the property and the factory. That was 1850. They loved to tell the story later about how they were poor immigrants and they built this business, but I think they started with capital. They came first-class to America. That boat they took was the latest steamer, and you can see from the passenger list that they were no ignorant immigrants coming here. They were some guys with some dough and an idea."

Although they apparently had the wherewithal to go into business immediately upon arriving in the United States, Steinway and his sons first schooled themselves in the ways of American manufacturing, by working for other New York piano makers. The patriarch made soundboards for a manufacturer named Laucht, earning a salary of six dollars a week. (A letter in the family archives informs us that he could have earned seven dollars if he'd bothered to learn English.) His son Charles became a keymaker at the respected firm of William Nunns, and Henry Jr. worked for James Pirsson, who had invented an odd

double piano with keyboards at opposite ends. They regrouped and formed Steinway & Sons in 1853.

Henry: "In the early days, the prepotent guys were Charles, Henry, and the old man. Charles was the business guy, Henry was the inside man in the factory. He drew up our B scale, still basically the same today [the model B is Steinway's second-largest grand piano]. In 1865, Henry and Charles both died young men—they were in their thirties. Then their brother William persuaded the oldest brother, Theodore, to sell the business he'd started over in Germany and come to the United States."

Henry said the company "really took off" when the skills of Theodore, who is generally considered a piano engineering genius, were paired with the entrepreneurial and marketing talents of his brother William. "To me, this fellow William is the really interesting character, not because he's my grandfather but because he came here at age fourteen, so I'd say he was the first true American of the gang—totally bilingual, of course. He spoke French, too. He saw the opportunities in this country in the post-Civil War period, and so he developed the dealer network, he developed our system of agents, which everybody else has today. Of course the others had seen early on the idea of promoting the pianos through concert artists—it's credited to Henry junior—but William brought the artists in for technical reasons. He wanted to have these guys play the pianos and tell him what was wrong. They helped him develop the very quick, responsive Steinway action. Also he had an enormous capacity for public relations, in my opinion. I'm sure you've heard all about his Astoria ventures. He was very civically oriented, got involved in the anti-Tammany crusade and Democratic politics and all that stuff, but the purpose, in my opinion, was to sell pianos. William Steinway invented the piano industry. The idea that your daughter is a schlumpf unless she plays the piano, and you are not a cultured guy unless you have a piano in your house—that didn't come of itself, that was invented. And William Steinway did more to invent that than anybody."

The pattern established by Charles and Henry Steinway, Jr., and continued by William and Theodore, endured through the succeeding generations. Time after time, control of Steinway & Sons passed to a pair of male family members active in the day-to-day operations of the firm, one an "inside man"—a builder—one a financier, promoter, or salesman. Of the pair most recently active in the company, Henry Steinway was the president and factory man, while his younger brother John concentrated on marketing and promotion. (A third brother, Theodore, who retired in 1979, was an engineer.) I asked Henry and John how they were brought into the family business, and soon, with a little prodding, the talk turned to reminiscences of different days.

John: "None of us, not one of us, was ever pressured by our father—'You must, my son, learn all about this because you will inherit the business one day.' There was never that in our upbringing that I remember."

Henry: "We never worked on college vacations."

John: "I worked one summer, but that was more a thing to do to keep out of trouble and earn a few bucks—and it was damn few, by the way, in those days. I don't remember until I was a senior in college and about to embark on some kind of employment, my father saying, 'Well, there is Steinway & Sons. If you want to work at Steinway & Sons, you report to the factory at 7:30 in the morning and you start in the lumber pile'—which is exactly what I did."

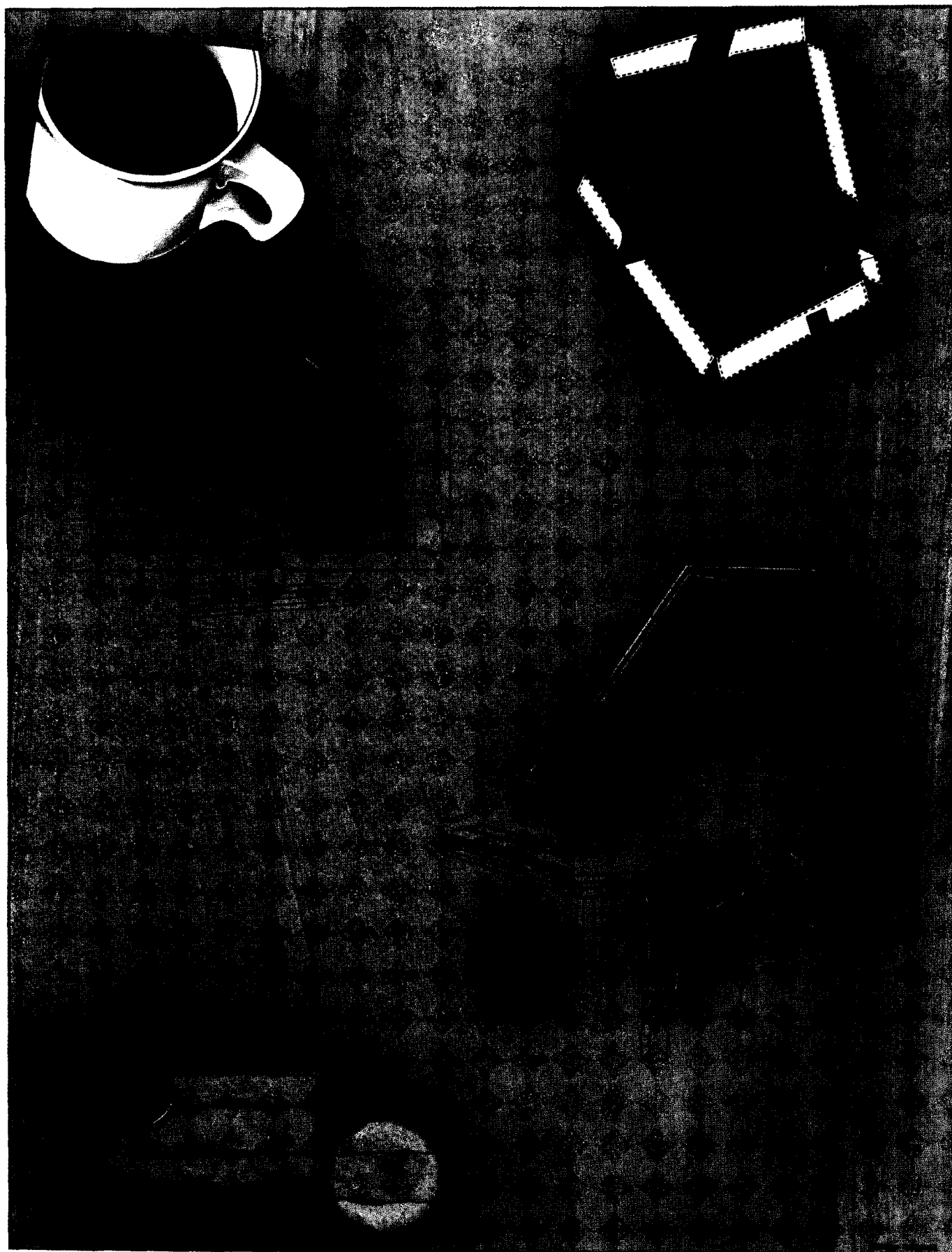
Henry: "I graduated from Harvard in 1937. I'd never done a goddamn bit of useful work in my life. And '37, if you look at the charts, was the time of the junior depression—you know, things started getting good, then in '37 it fell out of bed again. So finally, as the cold weather came, I said well, I guess I'll try the piano business. I went, and I was sent over to Theodore Cassebeer, the factory manager, and the people there were thrilled, because of the old emotional thing."

"The factory, in the fall of '37, was working one day a week. One day the workmen came in—there was no union at the time—but the foremen were kept on. So the other four days, for me, was talking to the foremen, who at that time were almost a hundred percent Germanic background, and sopping up what I could of the tradition and the background and the type of personality that really makes the piano. And this was a big education for me, for a snotty Harvard guy, to be sitting around with these fellows who had worked with their hands all their life and had enormous respect for education—too much respect. They thought I was terribly brainy because I could read and write and all that sort of thing."

John: "Back when we were apprentices, the foremen had more power. We didn't have a big personnel department. The foreman did the hiring and firing in the department. I remember some of those departments broke down ethnically. Because the foreman happened to be Swedish, there were five Swedes in the department, because they were all landsmen of his."

Henry: "Oh, absolutely. We encouraged nepotism in any way—people coming from Europe, referral of relatives. We believed in it. The belly department was Scandinavian—not only Swedish, but Scandinavian. The grand regulating department was Hungarian. That was a scream, because these guys were mostly first-generation, and none of them was over four foot six. You'd go into the department, they were behind the pianos—you'd think nobody was there! The whole finishing end was Irish. And then the Italians, they were considered a subject race by everybody. The Germans and so on said, oh, stick 'em with the Irish. Of course now the Italians are the aristocrats of the factory."

I commented that, given all the years of tradition and nepotism, one might expect the Steinway factory to be filled today with third- and fourth-generation piano makers. Yet it seemed still to be manned mostly by first-generation immigrants. Henry said, "I have always believed



in our hiring, when I was in charge down there, that the immigrants were a good source. Because they're hungry, they're willing to work.

"At one time, we had many, many second-generation guys, a lot of them sons of employees. They had German names, but they were as American as apple pie. We still have certain families—Walter Drasche is still with us, up in engineering, and Bobby Moffa is the end of a whole line. But in general, it's the upward mobility of the American worker. It's one of the things that really makes this country good. I don't know how many guys worked at Steinway and sent their sons to college and they became teachers or accountants, went into business—improved themselves. I run into guys all the time—and, John, I'm sure you do, too—who say, 'Oh, I had an uncle who worked at Steinway.' What did he do? They never know what the hell he did. Very frustrating."

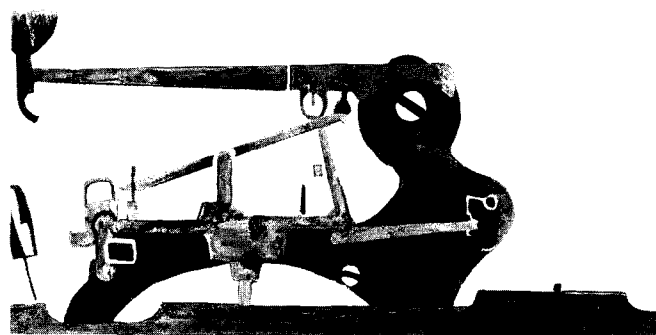
John: "I had a letter the other day from the grandson of old Matthias Heitzman; remember him, the top-making foreman? The grandson lives in California, he's a lawyer. But grandpa had worked at Steinway. And I wrote him back and said sure, I remember him well, I worked with him in his department when I was an apprentice."

Henry: "Before the union came, in 1939—and I don't blame the union for this, you just can't fight it—a craftsman was a craftsman, and he did not associate himself with the floor sweeper. This guy had a trade, he was a woodworker, and he felt himself a class apart."

John: "In the thirties, still, the senior craftsman would arrive at the factory with a bowler hat and a collar, a separate collar and tie. And he'd take the collar and tie off but leave the collar button, and that was the sign of the craftsman. He didn't come in any work shirt—hell no, he put his apron on. He was a top-skilled craftsman."

These were the people who felt the "old emotional thing" that Henry had mentioned in describing his first days at the factory—a sense of joy and relief that the boss's son was going to enter the family business and continue the lineage. I remarked that today the boss's son would probably be resented instead.

"I think you're right," Henry replied. "There was an old-fashioned familial feeling then. It's indescribable. I don't know what it was. It was not only these guys who were born in Europe, but a lot of workers were still living in the Steinway community in Astoria, and they were second- and third-generation, regular Astoria guys, but they *lived* together. It was while the thirties was going on that this move of the workers toward buying a house farther out started. I would say in '37, when I was there, well over half of our people walked or took the trolley car to work. And by now I bet we don't have ten guys out of 400 that walk or take the bus to work. They almost all drive in from somewhere. Why? The guy wants to have a house, he doesn't like attached houses, he wants to go out far enough so he can get his plot of ground around him—and that's the American way."



CUSTOM WORK

STEINWAY'S MANUFACTURING METHODS ARE CAREFUL and traditional, but they are not primitive. In the rim-bending room, where a century ago the use of hot animal glue required that grand-piano rims remain locked in their presses for the better part of a day or more, synthetic glue is now cured by high-frequency heating, allowing most rims to be removed in little more than an hour. (The high-frequency curing is not necessary in the case of the model D, which is produced at a rate of fewer than 200 a year.) In the plate department, which once ran chiefly on steam power and elbow grease, paint sprayers and electric grinders abound. Where the soundboards of old were shaped by patient craftsmen with hand planes, giant planing and sanding machines now do the job automatically.

This modernization, however, has been confined largely to the areas where individual parts are made. On the third and fourth floors of the factory, where the parts begin coming together for assembly, the machines and up-to-the-minute industrial techniques fade into the background. To a remarkable extent, Steinway has eschewed the assumption that piano pieces can be made to specifications and fitted together interchangeably. It is much more common for parts to be built originally to excess dimensions, so that they can be painstakingly matched one to the other by the same means used in the 1800s—human hands, eyes, and sweat.

The fourth floor of the factory is the home of the "belly" department, which performs one of the first, and one of the most critical, in a long line of custom-fitting operations. The title of the job's description makes it seem a rather simple affair—to fit and glue a soundboard into the case—but it actually involves the installation of several ancillary parts and takes roughly eight hours, usually over the course of two days. The bellyman who worked on K 2571 was Valentine Toussaint, an immigrant from the Caribbean island of Saint Kitts, and he was something to see. A lithe, muscular man of thirty-four, wearing a rugged leather apron to protect his trousers and a headband to keep the sweat out of his eyes, he stalked the perimeter of the piano with the single-mindedness of a man possessed. Like most Steinway hands, he is paid for speed, on a piece-

work basis. More than most, however, he obviously comes to the factory to make money. At one point well into the job, he opened a locker, popped a few pieces of candy into his mouth, and announced that he was taking a break. He was back at work before three minutes had passed. The job comprised long sequences of minute, interdependent steps, and, because it involved considerable gluing, he worked on two pianos at once, moving to one as the glue set on the other. Despite this, he never had to pause to consider his next move. The tools he needed always seemed to be right at his fingertips. His drill always seemed to have the right bit in it. Joe Pramberger, Steinway's vice president in charge of manufacturing, passed Toussaint's "station" on a walk through the factory and stopped for a moment to watch. "Look at him," Pramberger said in a low tone of admiration, "he doesn't waste a move." Pramberger pointed out a long row of cubbyholes, each containing one tool, on a workbench behind Toussaint. "See those tools he's got back there? Move one of them and you'd throw his whole routine off."

He was fast, but not hasty. The cast-iron plate, which had been fitted to the case the day before, was now suspended from a ceiling-mounted winch, and Toussaint must have raised and lowered it at least half-a-dozen times in the course of the job, each time making certain measurements, placing certain parts. For a while I wondered why he didn't make all the necessary measurements and guide marks at once—wouldn't that be faster?—but I learned that the repetitiveness is an essential part of the custom-fitting process. He had to adjust the height of the bridge, but he couldn't do that until he knew how the soundboard would sit in the piano's case. He couldn't know how the soundboard would sit until he had prepared and installed the rail to which it would be glued at the front of the case. He couldn't know exactly where the front rail would go until he had planed the soundboard to fit the back of the case. Patterns helped him to place the pieces, but the patterns merely represented a design; Toussaint was working on a piano.

Determining the height of the bridge—or "taking the bearing," as it's called at Steinway—was the most critical part of Toussaint's job. In the finished piano, the bridge extends upward from the soundboard through cutout sections of the cast-iron plate above, meeting the strings at a point slightly higher than the top of the plate. For the strings effectively to transmit their vibrations to the bridge, which in turn transmits them to the soundboard, they must bear down on it with a force of between 600 and 900 pounds. Too little pressure, and the piano will sound weak; too much, and it will sound muffled. Because the position of the plate, and thus the height of the strings, has been determined at this stage, the height of the bridge must be adjusted, by planing, to result in the proper pressure. The bridge is built originally to excess height and capped with a layer of easily planed wood to make this adjustment possible.

To take the bearing, Toussaint arranged the soundboard and plate in the case as they would fit when glued and bolted in permanently, then produced a small wooden box from which he took a few lengths of green string and several "bearing blocks"—thin rectangular pieces of metal, smaller than postage stamps, each marked with its thickness. He ran one of the green strings through an agraffe, across the bridge, and back to the rear of the plate—as though it were a true piano string. He placed a one-millimeter-thick bearing block on the plate and held the string down on it with his finger. The string thus rose from the agraffe to the bridge, and from there descended to a point one millimeter above the surface of the plate. Toussaint's object was to adjust the bridge so there would be no rise and no descent. Later, when the piano was strung with wire and no bearing blocks, this would give just the right amount of rise and descent—the right amount of pressure.

With a thick handsaw, Toussaint made a shallow gash in the bridge's cap, passed the string through it, peered at the string, wiggled it around a little, and deepened the gash, continuing in this fashion until he was satisfied that the string was just resting on the bottom of the gash, with no upward or downward deflection. Then he blackened the bottom of the gash with a lead pencil. After performing this operation with different-sized bearing blocks at fourteen different "notes" from the bass side to the treble, he had fourteen black gashes on the bridge. He hoisted the plate, removed the soundboard, and hand-planed the bridge until the pencil marks just disappeared. Presumably, the bridge was now precisely the right height.

Plenty of work remained, however, before Toussaint would know for sure. He drilled holes in the bridge for the bridge pins that would guide the strings across it. He painted the top of the bridge with lubricating black graphite, then chiseled notches in it, by hand, so that each string would come in contact with only a carefully defined section of wood. He hammered the copper-colored bridge pins in, 486 of them, again by hand, and filed down their tops—twice. About two hours after taking the bearing, he was ready to glue the soundboard to the top of the inner rim. He lifted the board out of the piano and placed it in a "steam box"—a heated locker—a few yards from his station. He closed the window behind him, and, without any signal that was apparent to me, the man at the next station closed his window and appeared at Toussaint's side with a glue bucket in hand. Hastily, the two brushed hot animal glue onto the inner rim. The glue, which is useless once it begins to cool, was the reason for the haste, for the steam box, and for the closed windows—even though it was August. When Toussaint set his brush down and hurried to the steam box for the soundboard, two more workers materialized, one of them dragging a cart holding more than forty large C clamps. Toussaint slapped the board into place, and all began clamping and tightening. When it was done, no more than a couple of minutes later, the helpers disappeared as quickly as they had come.

The glue was allowed to set for several hours. After removing the clamps and performing a few final tasks, Tous-saint bolted the plate into place over the soundboard, and reached once more into his little box of green strings and metal chips to check the bearing. It had been six hours since he had first threaded those strings through the piano, and much had happened to K 2571 in the meantime. I was amazed to see that now, as he threaded them again, they still lay perfectly flat across the bridge. I felt like exclaiming, "It worked!" I recorded this sentiment in my notebook, and when I looked up, Toussaint was bent over another piano.

TWO WEEKS LATER, AS VAHE FESDJIAN INSTALLED A set of 243 strings on K 2571—one each for the lowest eight notes, two each for the next five, and three each for all the rest—workers on the floor below him prepared the piano's action, the device that would impart to the strings the energy of the pianist's fingers. This device is the essence of the piano: when the reference books say that Bartolommeo Cristofori invented the instrument sometime around 1700, they really mean he invented the action. The rest, after all, was just wood and wire, things that could be found on any harpsichord or clavichord.

Before the eighteenth century, stringed keyboard instruments were severely limited—at least in comparison with the modern piano—by the means they employed to excite the strings to vibration. In the harpsichord, the strings were plucked by a quill, an arrangement that gave off the same volume regardless of how firmly the keys were struck. With the clavichord, the player could control the volume of individual notes, but there wasn't much volume to control. The instrument was small, and its strings were struck with a "tangent," a small metal blade embedded in the back of each key; the sound it produced was similar in character and volume to a single note on a modern autoharp—if the autoharp is played softly. Another drawback was that the tangent had two functions: in addition to exciting the string, it stopped the string—that is, determined the length of its vibrating section, much as a guitarist or violin player does with his finger. As soon as the clavichordist removed his finger from the key, the tone would disappear. A modern piano maker would say that the clavichord had no "carry."

Cristofori's solution to these problems was the *gravicembalo col piano e forte*—"harpsichord with soft and loud"—the earliest extant examples of which date back to the 1720s. Though rather basic by modern standards, Cristofori's action performed all the essential functions of the modern action save one: the "repetition," which allows a note to be restruck before the key returns to its original position. This may not have been necessary in Cristofori's time, but later, as piano cases grew stronger and their strings and hammers larger, the touch of the keyboard became deeper and heavier, and players began to find that

they could not repeat notes as rapidly as they wanted to. This problem was ultimately solved by a French piano maker, Sébastien Érard, who, in 1821, patented the "double-escapement" action that is the basis for all grand-piano actions made today.

The modern grand action is a marvelously complicated device, a contraption of wood, felt, leather, spring wire, and small bits of metal that must accomplish a bewildering variety of functions simultaneously. First, it must multiply the motion of the key in both speed and distance: the hammer must move farther and faster than the key does. Second, so the hammer will not remain pressed against the strings if the key remains depressed—thus muffling the sound it has created—the hammer must be thrown free from the rest of the action, so that it travels independently over the last fraction of its path and rebounds immediately after striking the strings. Third, the hammer must not bounce back up to the strings with its momentum; the action must catch and hold it as it makes its downward arc. Fourth, because the player will want to restrike a note without waiting for the key to come back up, or without having to lift his finger entirely off the key, the part that propels the hammer must return to its original position, ready to strike again, while the hammer itself and the rest of the action are still in motion. Meanwhile, the damper that has been sitting over the strings, preventing them from vibrating in sympathy with other notes, must be lifted so the strings can sound cleanly, and must fall back promptly to cut off the sound when the key is released—unless the player *wants* the sound to continue after the key has been released, an eventuality that must also be taken into account. Finally, of course, the action must do all this without making the slightest sound of its own.

Most piano manufacturers buy their actions ready-made from suppliers to the trade. Steinway buys actions for its upright pianos, but all its grand actions are made in the Astoria factory, mostly in two long, narrow rooms on the second and third floors. These rooms are the domain of John Scalera, the action-assembly foreman, who hired on at Steinway shortly after arriving in the U.S. from Italy. He had a cousin who was employed in the mill department. Scalera spends most of his working day walking the aisles of the department, solving problems, answering questions, and peering into the innards of recalcitrant wood-working machines. As he goes, he carries with him the image of a sort of universal pianist—"he"—whose needs define the job and remind him of its importance. Once, as he loaded my cupped hands with the seventeen small wooden parts that go into each note's action assembly, he told me that most of them wouldn't be necessary if "he" wanted to play a note only once, but "he" sometimes wants to repeat notes rapidly. Another time, he explained the necessity of the back check, which catches and holds the hammer on its way down, by saying, "See, he doesn't want a second sound. He wants to play when *he* feels it's necessary to play."

In the action department, the Steinway plant comes closest to the popular conception of what a busy but aging American manufacturing facility looks, sounds, and smells like. In the second-floor room, where wood is cut and machined into the elaborate shapes of the action parts, sawdust hangs constantly in the air, despite an impenetrable tangle of vacuum pipes designed to suck it toward the ceiling and dispatch it to the wood-burning boiler; it is mixed with the smell of lubricating oil and just a touch of the burning odor produced by the friction of automatic knives and saws against wood. The machines emit high-pitched whines as they shape the wood, and parts of them seem to move up and down, in and out, of their own volition, gasping with bursts of air pressure as though they were breathing. In one corner of the room, a woman feeds a slat of wood into one end of a machine and collects several dozen small action parts from the other. In an opposite corner, an automatic tumbler spins continuously, rolling parts against one another to eliminate the tiny splinters and imperfections left by the cutting machines. Next to the tumbler, a woman behind a desk sorts through a pile of parts, occasionally plucking out a reject and discarding it.

Directly above the machining room, in a space identical in layout but somewhat more genteel in ambience, workers glue felt to the wood at nearly every point where the parts will meet, to prevent noise in the finished action. At three especially troublesome locations, where the collisions will be particularly high in impact, they apply the skin of a small Brazilian deer to cushion the blows. This skin is especially prized for use in the "knuckle," the part of the hammer shank that bears the full brunt of the pianist's enthusiasm. In the early 1970s, when the Brazilian government put a temporary embargo on the export of these skins, Steinway engineers tried replacing them with materials as familiar as cowhide and as exotic as the skin of an African antelope called the kudu; nothing they tried seemed to have the right combination of durability, thickness, and grain structure. They now buy the Brazilian deerskins in year's-supply lots and keep their fingers crossed.

The action parts are joined by tiny metal pins, each pin constituting a hinge, or "action center," around which the parts must move freely. A set of eighty-eight finished "repetition" assemblies is then screwed into one side of a metal frame, and a set of eighty-eight independent hammer shanks into the other. Finally, the shanks are fitted with felt-covered hammerheads, manufactured in a separate department adjacent to the action rooms. Here again, Steinway departs from conventional practice by making its own hammers, for both grand pianos and uprights. The felt strips and wooden slats from which the hammerheads are made are tapered from one end to the other, with the result that the shape of the hammers changes from the bottom of the scale to the top—from plump, pear-shaped masses of felt to thin, hard, felt-covered sticks. The strings at the treble end of the piano are very short and rigid, and

it is difficult to coax much sound from them; the graduation of size and shape in the hammerheads is one of several measures taken to even the responsiveness of the instrument across the scale.

K 2571'S ACTION WAS FINISHED ON SEPTEMBER 16, when Jorge Nieves inspected and regulated it to ensure that its parts would move the way they were intended to. When he dispatched it to the forefinishing department, to meet the rest of the piano, most of the instrument's major parts were complete, and things began coming together rapidly. On September 24, Eddie Carrasco matched the action to a set of keys manufactured by Pratt, Read & Company of Ivoryton, Connecticut. (There hasn't been much ivory coming out of Ivoryton lately; Steinway switched to plastic-covered keys in the 1950s.) Then, in a woodworking operation no less exacting than the bellying job, Carrasco fitted the key-action assembly into the case in a way that accommodated two impossibly contradictory demands. So that the wooden frame on which the keys rested would not clack against the case's key bed in fortissimo passages, the two surfaces had to fit so snugly against each other that they would act as virtually a single piece of wood. At the same time, the entire key-action assembly had to be able to move about an eighth of an inch toward the treble side of the case when the left, or "soft," pedal was depressed, so the hammers would strike only two of three unison strings in the three-string notes, and one of two in the two-string notes. Carrasco achieved this miracle by hand-planing the wooden surfaces in a convoluted arrangement of concavities, convexities, and clearances. It was custom work.

When he was finished—when, in the words of his foreman, Tony Fernandez, the action and case were "man and wife"—workers in the grand-finishing department made the union irrevocable by installing wood blocks and hardware around the inside perimeter of the case to hold the action and guide its motion. A couple of days later, the action was reinspected, and any parts that did not move freely enough were taken apart and repinned. On the morning of October 16, K 2571 was wheeled into a soundproofed room and subjected to the "banger," an eighty-eight-fingered robot that played a rumbling composition of almost unbearable atonality, striking each key some 10,000 times in a span of forty-five minutes; then Paul Juganaru spent about eight hours fussing with the keys and broken-in action. On October 21, after being tuned for the first time, the piano went to the work station of Earl Baldwin, who made and installed a set of dampers, and from there it went to the rubbing department, where its shiny, sprayed-on coat of black lacquer was reduced, largely by hand, to a smooth, dull softness. On November 3, almost nine months after taking shape in the rim-bending room, K 2571 finally looked and worked like a Steinway. Now all that remained was to make it sound like one.



SEARCHING FOR THE MASTER PLAN

AS I FOLLOWED THE PROGRESS OF K 2571 THROUGH the factory, it gradually dawned on me that the people I was watching were assembling a very difficult jigsaw puzzle—one made up of tiny but critical details—without ever referring to the complete picture. Some of these details seemed to exist only in the heads of the workers who needed to know them. For example, the man in the case-parts department who made the cores for grand-piano tops, gluing boards of poplar together into large, L-shaped panels, had to know that poplar isn't strong enough to hold the hinges that attach the top to the case; the last board on the bass side of the top has to be maple. How did he know this? His foreman told him. Did the men who veneered the tops or attached the hinges know? Maybe they did, but they didn't have to.

Other details were on paper. Frank Urich, the foreman of the belly department, had a construction order from the engineering department telling him that in winter, when the steam heat was on in the factory, the tuning-pin holes that his workers bored into grand-piano pin blocks should be 0.255 inches in diameter; in summer, when humidity might cause the wood to expand, the holes should be 0.253 inches. No other foreman received a copy of this order, because no other foreman needed to know.

A great many such details were embodied in patterns, the plastic bars and wooden arms and perforated metal plates that the workers were constantly using to measure and shape their materials. For example, after years of use, the most-often struck keys on the piano, those in the middle of the scale, tend to sag in height with respect to the others. To compensate, the height of the keys in a new Steinway rises, gradually and imperceptibly, from the ends to the middle: the middle keys on a model D are one thirty-second of an inch higher than the keys at either end. The various workers who set and check the height of the keys do so visually, using long wooden rulers whose bottom edges are arched. Presumably, a worker might never notice that the middle of his "straight edge" was a fraction of an inch higher than the ends, yet he would still set the key level according to the wishes of the piano's designer.

I stumbled over details like these only by accident, and as they accumulated I began to sense a presence in the

factory that refused to reveal itself. Where, I wondered, was the big picture? Where did the design of this piano reside? I put my questions to Joe Pramberger, and he led me out of his office into the large, open room that accommodates the company's engineering and research-and-development departments. In one corner of the room, a young man sat at a video-display console, feeding lists of parts and details of assembly into a computer, but Pramberger wasn't taking me there. Against one wall, tall metal cabinets held rolled-up engineering drawings, but Pramberger wasn't headed there, either. The room was lined with bookcases, and one of them contained black loose-leaf binders stuffed with sketches, specifications, and descriptions of various procedures, but instead of stopping there, Pramberger pointed me toward the far end of the room, where a short, white-haired, nattily dressed old man was smoking a Camel cigarette and poring over a letter written in German. "You want to talk to John Bogynos," Pramberger said. "He's the guru."

I introduced myself to Bogynos and told him what Pramberger had said about him. He replied, in an accent that seemed to contradict what he was saying, "Well, that's just 'cause I'm so long here." He told me he had been working at Steinway for fifty-one years, and that his father had worked there as a tuner before him.

"I was to be a professional musician," Bogynos said. "That's what my father was, in Europe, and that's how come he was able to get in here—they only took those days professional people entering from our areas. His ambition was to come over here and work maybe three years and make enough money to build this dream house in the city of Nagyvárad, in Hungary, where we lived, and go back and live happily ever after. This is the basics of most people who come here. He had to wait six years to get his citizen's papers; that's when we came. In other words, he then saw that life is better here. Although we built the house—the house was there, everything was ready for him to come back—he just said no, the life is better over here, you come here and that's it. He never saw it.

"I studied music in Europe, but by then there wasn't anything at all for musicians here, so I couldn't get a start on that. But Steinway & Sons had a band specifically for the workers, and they just at the time happened to need a flute player, which was my instrument, and that's how I got the job here. Besides, my father worked here, that helped."

Bogynos worked in various departments at Steinway, and studied drafting at night in anticipation of getting a job at Con Edison—which also had a concert band. The Depression destroyed that possibility. When World War II came, Steinway began making wooden parts for gliding airplanes, and the young draftsman was moved into the pattern shop, which was then undergoing quite a transformation.

"When I got into engineering we called it the pattern shop. It was in Ditmars [an ancillary factory building in

Astoria, since sold], up on the seventh floor, up in heaven, sort of. You were left alone. And the way they worked it, Frank Walsh, who was my boss at the time, he was the chief engineer, he came up like I did in the factory—from an office boy he became plant manager and engineer. He had his own book, and he just wrote down everything he ever saw, how it was done, how it was made. And every foreman had a little book, like littler than yours, in his back pocket, for his department. It was everything more or less verbal—passed down from son to son, as far as the Steinway family was concerned, and from foreman to foreman. There was no such thing as specifications. There were some drawings, and where there weren't drawings, they had patterns. And that's why it was called the pattern shop. The major pattern was hanging on the wall or, if it was small, in some drawer. And if something had to be made, and something happened to the secondary pattern which was in the factory, okay, then they came here and we compared, or made a new one from this, et cetera. But there were very little drawings, as we know them today."

As Bogynos remembered it, this all began to change when the glider contracts came in. "The Army insisted on a drawing for anything, even a screw, which you don't manufacture, you purchase: you say 'I want a two-and-a-half-inch number twelve flathead screw'—boom, period. But they insisted on a drawing of it. Frank Walsh, from learning what he did in building gliders for the Army, where they had strict dimensions and specifications, he theorized that this might be a good idea for our industry, that you could have something to hold on to, and you could say now, you know that this string, when it's tuned to A 440, should have a tension of about 187 pounds. So these are the things we eventually set down on paper.

"Over the years, as I had time—and Frank Walsh, he was a very good draftsman, he loved drafting—we made drawings of the parts. I think I started out with a little upright, model 1073, I think; I took *each* part, and made a drawing from it, so now we could say here is part number so-and-so, and this is the way you got to make it. And the next thing my boss asked me was for each department, to write out every operation as it is done at the time. So we have books now over there, we call it the bible, where every operation is written out."

As a tuner played a single-note melody in a room nearby, I asked Bogynos if I was understanding this correctly. Was he saying that the model D, for example, was not made from drawings or specifications? That the drawings and specifications had, in effect, been made from the piano? He walked to one of the tall metal cabinets. "The only D scale drawings we have passed on to us," he answered, "are from finished pianos, after the fact . . . The original Steinway, that's Henry Engelhard Steinway, he built a piano, in Europe, in his kitchen—I think you must've heard this story—and he had a tremendous success with his first piano. And following then most of his sons were interested, and they improved, kept on improving. They'd lay

out a scale, build the piano, and they'd make changes until they had it so it sounded right. After they had the success, then they would make a drawing of that scale, of everything. And so, okay, in this closet, these are all old drawings—I hate to take 'em out, they might fall apart. There's not one here that says 'This is the original D layout and this is what we're gonna build.' This is what they *built*."

Well, I asked, was the process of copying the piano's design onto paper complete? Did the design of the D reside in any of these old drawings, or in the drawings that Bogynos and his boss had made after the war, or in the "bible" they had written? "I don't think anything is ever completed," Bogynos said. "No, no, there's a whole lot now, and you see they're working over there trying to put it all on computer. And they've been working on it for three years and I don't think they got it yet." He was laughing.

Was there enough information on hand, I asked, to *extrapolate* the design of the model D? (I was determined to find the master plan.) "Pretty much," Bogynos said. "In other words, we have the most important thing, the scale, which is the beginning of everything. The scale is simply a layout, divisions."

"Peter," he said, addressing a young assistant who was working nearby, "get me a scale stick."

"Okay," he continued, "the scale is not laid out always equally throughout, the divisions are not equal. But the scale shows where the hammer should strike the strings, and where the keyboard in back should be, and so you make up a set of keys, you make up an action, and the parts should then fall into place. The first thing you do when you design a piano, you draw a straight line on a piece of paper—a big piece—and you divide your scale. Then you build everything around it."

Peter, by this time, had returned with the scale stick. "That's handed down from maybe the early 1900s," Bogynos said. It was a long stick of wood with lines on it. From this, Bogynos was telling me, he could build a piano.

I tried asking the question another way. What if you went on vacation, I said to Bogynos, and while you were gone a fire swept through the plant and destroyed all the drawings, all the loose-leaf binders, all the patterns, and you had to start building the model D from scratch. Where would you turn? What would you do?

"Well," he said, "assuming all our records would be lost, I would do what I did with this upright." He was pointing toward the wall at a new model K, a fifty-two-inch-high upright; discontinued by Steinway years ago, it had recently been put back into production, under Bogynos's direction. "We had no prints of this K 52. It's an old upright, old-fashioned, and I had one of these home, so I brought it in here, took it apart, made drawings of it, and this is how we made them. Now, the problem with that is, if there were any wrongs in there, I probably would copy the wrongness, right? Well, I don't do things that way. I did find some questionable things in this piano that I didn't think should be that way, and I looked at the records of

what they did in Hamburg—they also built that piano at one time. And from an old foreman, I got some very valuable information. He had his old black book, and he let me have it to make copies of this prime information that was bugging me. The specifics of it was, the soundboard, which is a very important segment for tone in the piano, was an even thickness throughout, and I know that this is not so. From all history, as far back as you can go, they wouldn't ever make the soundboard one thickness throughout. They'd make it that way, but then they'd take away from certain areas to make it more flexible. But I could not find this on my piano. And when I got the foreman's pictures, showing me where, I found it on my piano too. I really looked, I drilled holes in the damn thing. But you see, just by looking, I couldn't see it. Everything is so hidden."

Just as I was thinking that this was precisely the sort of problem that would be avoided if one had a complete set of drawings and specifications, Bogynos taught me a little lesson in the value of drawings and specifications. He took me to a counter and showed me a drawing he had made, a very detailed and precise-looking draftsman's rendering of a metal bar that fit over the plate of the model K and pressed down on its treble strings. He opened a drawer that held several prototypes of this bar, all made from the drawing by an independent foundry, and all rejected by Steinway. Picking up one of the bars, he showed me a smidgen of excess metal that had not been machined from one of its corners. Had the bar been a part for a truck or an airplane, the error surely would have been insignificant. But Bogynos knew, even if the foundry didn't, that one of three unison strings had to fit beneath the gap that wasn't there, and that the improperly machined bar would soften one note of the piano's eighty-eight. The necessary engineering information was all on the drawing; it was the piano-making information that was missing.

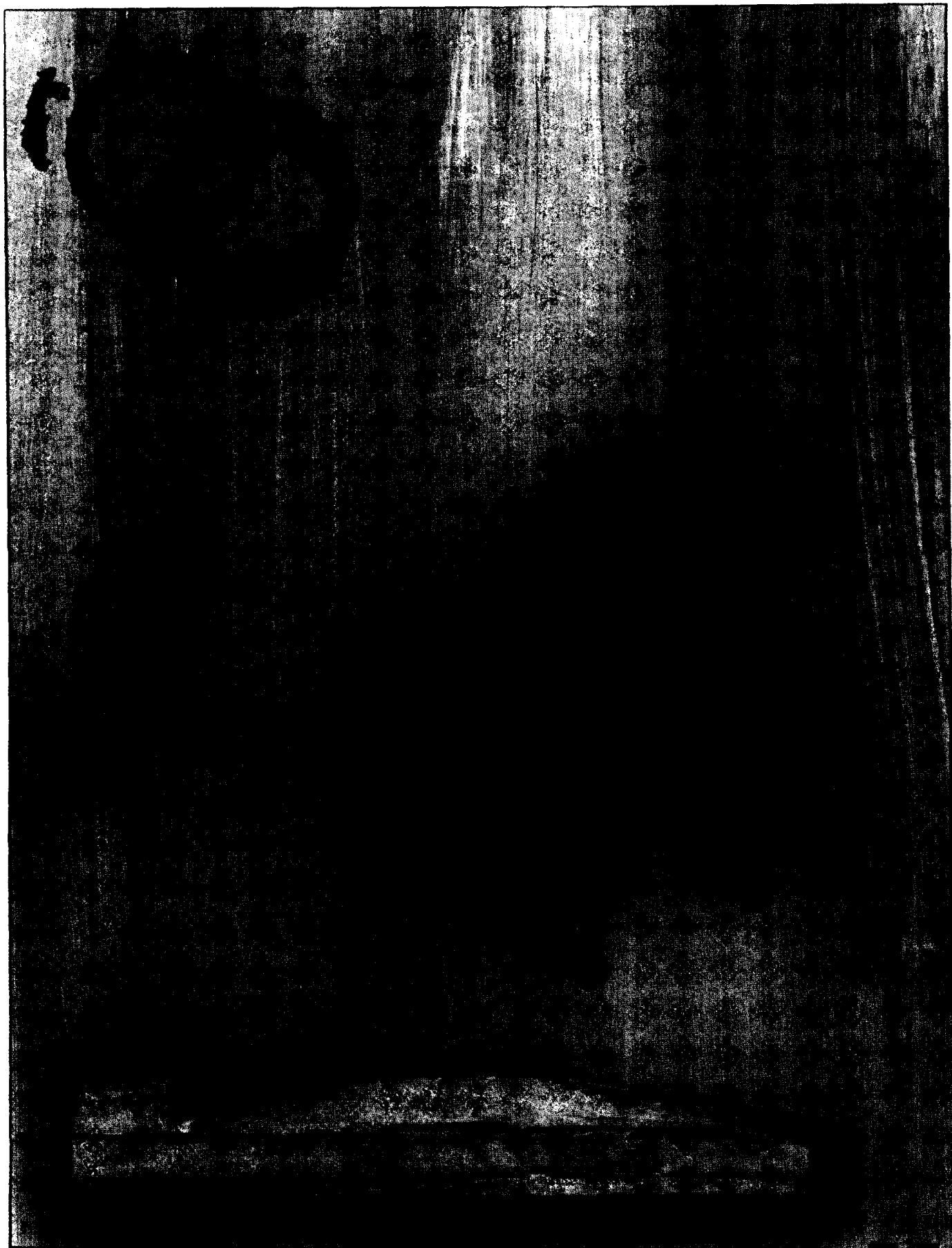
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, WHEN K 2571 WAS wheeled into the workroom of Raymond Parada, most of the elements that would contribute to its sound were irrevocably in place. The soundboard wood had been selected and shaped months before. The bridge bearing was set. Most of the details of the scale had been determined, and so had the myriad fine points of construction—the quality of this gluing job, the precision of that fitting job, a thousand decisions made in haste through winter, summer, and fall. The piano sounded lousy. Raymond Parada played a few notes on it for me, then took me outside his room to hear a piano he had recently completed. Compared to the rich resonance of the finished piano, K 2571 was rinky-dink. Some notes buzzed, others faded too fast. None seemed loud enough. "There's nothing there," Parada said. But, he assured me, "by the time I'm done it will have a lot of power." Parada would add almost nothing to K 2571—a few pieces of paper, a small pile of lead weights, several ounces of lacquer—yet he would

spend about twenty-five hours with the piano, more than any other single worker. A tone regulator (one of the "aristocrats of the factory," in Henry Steinway's words), he would transform the piano from potential to reality. Or, as Parada might say, from a machine into an instrument. He would "make the tone."

What this means exactly is difficult to say. It is a commonplace around the Steinway factory that no two pianos sound alike. For this reason, people who buy large grands—model Bs or Ds—are invited to come to the plant to select their purchase from three or four new pianos of the same model. Similarly, Steinway's concert-and-artists department, which lends pianos free of charge to artists for public performances, maintains a bank of more than forty pianos in the basement of Steinway Hall in Manhattan, and an artist who needs one may be permitted to choose from as many as a dozen. (The artist is responsible for the cost of tuning and transport. Similar but smaller banks—some as small as one piano—are maintained by Steinway dealers all over the country. Steinway boasts that 95 percent of all public piano performances in the U.S. are played on its instruments.) In attempting to explain the difference between one piano and another, an artist, or a piano technician, might say that one is "brilliant," the other "mellow"; he might say that one has a "warm, round" tone and describe the other as "metallic" or "brittle"; he might use terms like "carry," "singing," "power"—in other words, he might as well not bother to try explaining. The concept of tone is impossibly nebulous, and so, as a result, is the job of the tone regulator.

Physically, the mysterious part of the job, called "voicing," is a fairly simple matter of hardening and softening the felt of the hammers—hardening by impregnating it with a "juice" made of lacquer and lacquer thinner, softening by picking it with needles to separate its fibers. But to what end? Some visitors to the Steinway factory leave with the impression that the tone regulator determines the character of any particular piano; he decides what it will sound like according to his personal preference, and perhaps according to his mood. To counter this myth, some Steinway executives imply that voicing is just another operation, albeit a very important and painstaking one; the tone regulator, they tell you, merely tries to bring the piano's sound to an agreed-upon standard of excellence, and in that respect the job is different from no other.

The truth of the matter, as near as I could determine it, lies somewhere between these extremes. Given a certain level of quality in construction, sound, and touch, what artists seem to want most from a piano is range—*piano e forte*, the ability to produce the most delicate passages and the most thunderous. At Steinway, a large grand piano is most likely to be deficient in the *forte* department when it reaches the tone regulator, and to correct this deficiency he must harden its hammers with lacquer. But as the hammer felt absorbs lacquer, the sound it produces, in addition to becoming louder, becomes less "mellow" and more "bril-



liant." Beyond a certain point—a point that varies from one piano to the next, depending on numerous variables of construction—further volume is accompanied by an unpleasant metallic tone, one that is noticeable and grating to the ear even in soft passages. At this point, the piano is "giving back all it can give." The tone regulator's job is to identify this point and bring the piano to it; to make the piano as "brilliant" or "powerful" as possible without destroying all its "warmth" or "roundness." Of course, one regulator's idea of what is unpleasant may differ from another's, and it may even change from day to day. But pianists also differ, and they have their moods, as well as needs that vary according to the material they intend to play and the hall they must play it in. In the end, as long as the pianist is free to choose from a number of pianos, it all works out.

Raymond Parada, who regulates about half the 150 to 170 model Ds that come through the New York factory every year, explained it to me this way: "Sometimes you get a piano that is nice and even and mellow at the same time, and you will disturb it too much if you try to make it brilliant, make the hammers hard. It gives you the feeling that it's better the way it is. How could I give you an example? Say I would like to take a picture of something, a person, and I would like to have a lot of light in there—full light. And I don't have it. Yet with a subdued light, the object shows certain qualities, certain mysteries. Especially if you are taking a picture of a beautiful girl—her features and things like that. And you don't want to disturb that, risk it, by exposing it to full light. So some pianos are mellow. See what I mean?"

While most of Steinway's tone regulators are of Italian ancestry, Parada is "Spanish, from Spain." He was born in the United States, but his parents took him back to the old country when he was two or three, and by the time he returned he was a young man. Most of his colleagues in the Steinway aristocracy had risen to it slowly, coming up through several departments in the plant, but Parada was hired specifically to train as a tone regulator. He has been on the job for twenty-three years, and he handles many of the special assignments that come through the department.

He works in a large private room that is supposed to be soundproof but really isn't. His walls are decorated with a couple of Spanish travel posters and a button that reads, "I'M A HARD-WORKING NEW YORKER." Like many of the workers I encountered in my travels, he was overly apologetic about his English, but unlike most he was not shy about using it. As he worked on K 2571, over the course of about a week, he delivered himself of opinions on a great variety of subjects, including politics, his family, rock-and-roll, and, of course, the piano:

"I feel that many people do not understand the difference between a machine and an instrument. An automobile will perform for everybody the same. An auto has no heart, no soul, no brains. But a piano, I believe, is close to

having these things. It is like a human body, it functions at the service of your brain, at the service of your soul, your spirit. It is a bunch of mechanical things that produce at the end, yes, a spiritual value. It's like the piano has got a heart of its own, or a mind. The man that is there expresses beauty through the tips of his fingers in musical sounds. The piano is very close to a man; it's an extension of a man."

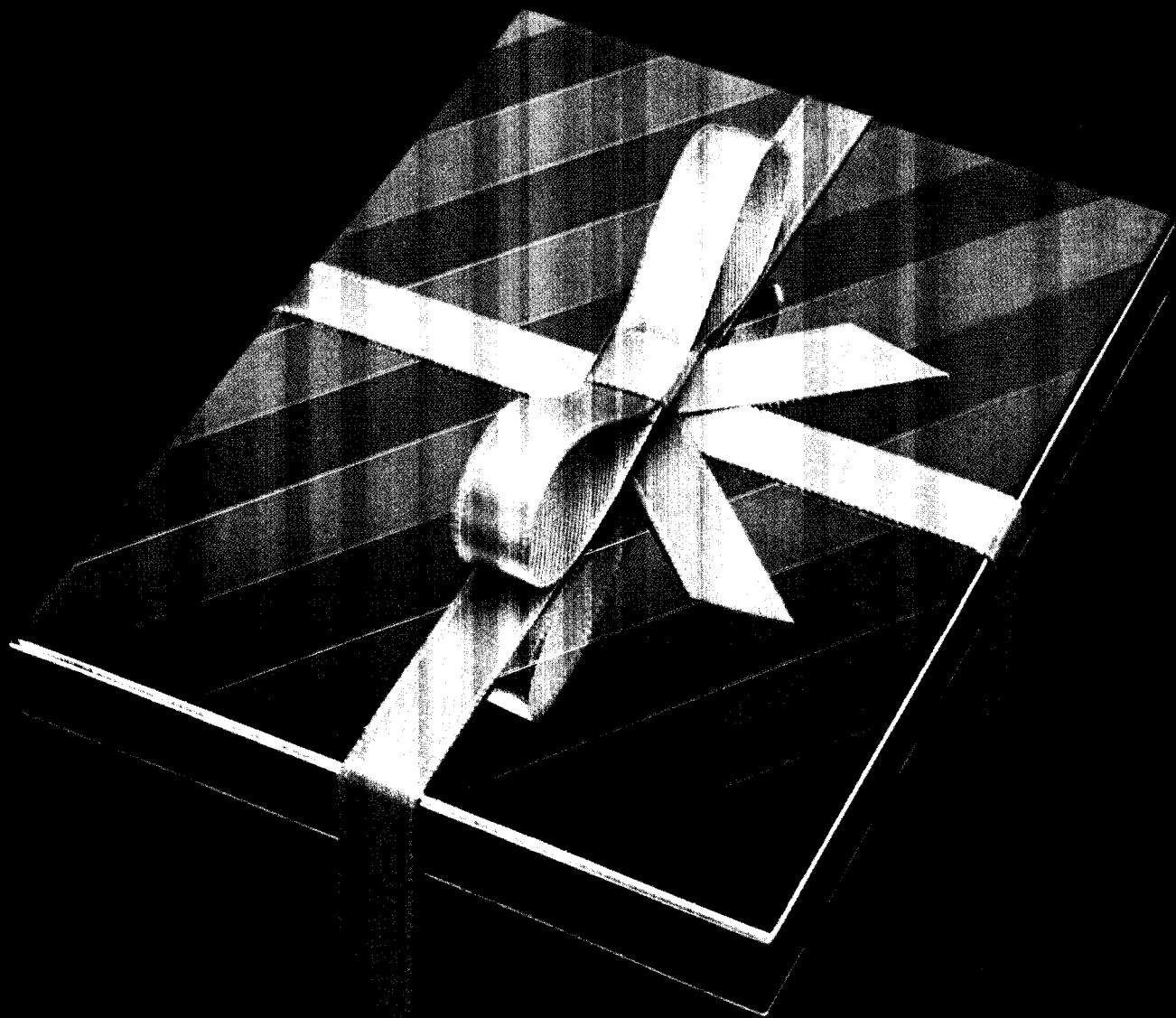
Parada is proud to be a part of it all. "See, every time I see a concert, or hear one on television, I feel privileged, because I feel myself behind that guy that is playing the piano. The artist might triumph, but behind him, in an anonymous way, I triumph with him. I feel like an artist, in other words. I feel I create something in my pianos. Tone is a creation. It's an extension for me, too."

"You see," he explained at one point, "I am a romantic."

WHEN PARADA BEGAN WORKING ON K 2571, I ASKED him if he could tell what sort of piano it would turn out to be, or if he knew yet what he would try to do with it. He said that the hammer felt was a little too soft for his taste, but not so soft that he was ready to relegate the piano to the ranks of the mellow. "We'll have to see," he said. "This one, I'm gonna try to bring it up. I like a little volume on the piano, so I like to make it a little harder. Some people do want kind of mellow pianos, you know, but I like them full—a true value. No half here, half there. That's what I'm looking for in life, in everything—true values."

Before he could set off on his quest, however, Parada had many hours of routine mechanical work to do. First, with a small file very much like a thick emery board, he rounded the hammers to a shape that twenty-three years of experience had burned into his memory. In the highest seventeen notes, the ones least inclined to sound powerfully, he cut small bits of felt and wood from the hammers to lighten them, so they would travel to the strings with greater velocity. (The level of the strings also lowers from the middle of the scale to the treble end, decreasing the distance that the hammers have to travel.) Then, sliding the action into the piano, he began the tedious, exacting process of reregulating its moving parts. Raising each hammer by hand and examining the way it met its strings, he made chalk marks on the keys to indicate errant hammers, then removed the action to make the necessary adjustments. His goal was to place each hammer and adjust its motion so that, in the three-string notes, for example, it would hit the three unison strings squarely, but move off one string entirely when the soft pedal was depressed. He had three different ways of doing this. He nudged the hammers one way or another by tapping their mounts with a hammer and chisel; they were screwed into the metal action frame, but the screw holes were oversize to allow for this adjustment. He also tilted some hammers, thus changing the plane of their arc, by inserting shims of gummed

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paper beneath their mounts, to one side or the other of the screws that held them in place. Finally, he "burned" some hammer shanks, heating them with the flame of an alcohol lamp to make them momentarily pliable and twisting them to the position he wanted.

Parada made these adjustments, and many other similar ones, without referring to any patterns. "I do it by ear, see. And everything I do here, I do eighty-eight times." Actually, he did everything no fewer than 264 times. Before finishing the piano, he went through this routine on three separate occasions. Each adjustment had been made several times before the piano had reached his department, and each would be made several times more as technicians prepared the piano for use. This, Parada explained, was the consequence of using such a capricious substance as wood for precision moving parts. "If the action were made of steel, we would do it once and that's it. But this is wood, wood keeps twisting. It reacts to the temperature, the weather, even though it is seasoned wood. That's why the idea of checking and rechecking so many times—to make sure everything stays where it is supposed to."

As Parada worked on the action, he was visited by a trio of dignitaries—not an uncommon occurrence for him, because he, like the rim-bending room, is one of the highlights of the factory visitors' tour. The tourist this day was the pianist André-Michel Schub, who was being escorted by Peter Perez and vice president David Rubin, manager of the company's concert-and-artists department. Schub, a bookish-looking twenty-eight-year-old, seemed to be the artist of the moment at Steinway; an enthusiastic endorser of the product, he had recently won the quadrennial Van Cliburn Competition in Fort Worth, Texas, and had agreed to play a short recital for Steinway employees before Christmas. He and Parada chatted about a fine point of action regulating for a moment, and then David Rubin suggested that if the timing worked out, it might be a nice touch for Schub to play K 2571—which by this time was known as the *Atlantic Monthly* piano—at the employees' recital. I said I was afraid that the piano might turn out to be a lemon, because I had been peering over the shoulders of the workers who had built it, taking notes, asking questions, and looking, no doubt, like a time-study engineer or some other sort of management spy. Rubin assured me that Steinway made no lemons, but the idea was left hanging in the air as the tour departed. When they were safely out of earshot, Parada whispered, "Who's gonna play this piano? That kid? And who's he, the winner of what?" I told him. "And he's gonna play my piano? Holy cow! Oh, my God, I'm not gonna sleep. I might make the first lemon."

After working on the action for about three and a half hours, Parada removed it from the key frame and slid the keys into the piano to set their level. A small jig, a rectangle of metal that fits between the lip of a key and the top surface of the key frame, showed him that keys number one and eighty-eight were both at the correct height, so on them he set his "straight-edge" pattern—the ruler whose

bottom edge rose to a crown of a thirty-second of an inch in the center. To check for low keys, he looked for light between the tops of the keys and ruler; to check for high ones, he tapped the stick gently across the outer keys and looked for any in the middle that moved. He raised and lowered the errant keys by adding and subtracting punchings of paper that fit between the keys and the key frame. The punchings were of five different colors, each representing a different thickness of paper. For the most part, Parada ignored the thinnest punchings and worked with the blue and white ones. Later, when I looked up the specifications for the punchings in the engineering department's bible, I learned that he had been discriminating between gaps of nine thousandths of an inch and gaps of sixteen thousandths. He did it visually, or, as he might say, "by ear."

A little after three o'clock—about seven hours after he had begun work on K 2571—Parada rose from his seat and announced, to his audience of one, "Gentlemen, this piano is ready to be weighed." Lead weights had already been added to the keys, before they were matched to an action, but these weights gave only a rough approximation of the "touch" desired in the end. Now Parada would do the fine work, determining how much extra lead to add to each key, and where to place it, so the keys would behave as a pianist would expect them to. He reached into a locker and brought out a small, felt-lined box containing round lead reference weights, each marked with its mass in grams; these represented the pianist's fingers. Also in the box were several square weights, unmarked, of two different sizes; these represented the lead that would be added to the keys. With the key-action assembly on his workbench, Parada placed a fifty-gram reference weight on the front part of key number one, and a couple of the smaller, unmarked weights near the key's center. He moved the square weights back and forth on the key, substituted a larger square for one of the smaller ones, tapped the action frame lightly with a closed fist, and kept fussing in this manner until the hammer rose slowly to its striking position under the weight of the fifty grams. Then he removed the fifty-gram weight, replaced it with nineteen grams, and fussed some more until the hammer descended slowly to its rest position. He had to weight the key so that it would do both: rise with a minimum force of fifty grams; and fall whenever the force, or the pianist's finger pressure, fell to nineteen grams or below. When he had to compromise, he always favored the fall, the idea being that the speed of the hammer's return is more important to the player than slight variations in the pressure needed to raise the hammers.

The keys were remarkably dissimilar: sometimes Parada had to add only one small weight to achieve the desired effect; the adjacent key might require two larger ones. When he had the weights placed the way he wanted them, he marked the side of the key with a red pencil for the workers who would install the leads, a group referred to

almost universally in the plant as “the girls.” The girls themselves perform this “weigh-off” operation on most pianos, but on the model Ds they merely install the weights according to the tone regulator’s instructions. As he proceeded up the scale, Parada changed the reference weights several times, with the result that notes on the treble end, where most fancy trills and runs are played, would play more easily and repeat faster than the bass notes.

The 4:15 quitting whistle was long gone by the time Parada finished this chore, and the plant was dark and quiet. Before leaving for the night, though, he wanted to juice the hammers with his solution of lacquer and lacquer thinner. Later, he would apply the juice deliberately—three drops on this hammer, ten on the next—but for now he soaked the hammers indiscriminately. “I don’t have to think now,” he said. “I know this felt is pretty far off, pretty soft, so I’m gonna give it as much as it can take. I always do this at this time, so it dries overnight. This stuff smells horrible.”

ON TUESDAY, ONE OF THE GIRLS CAME AND WHEELED away K 2571’s keys, to install the lead weights. Parada worked on another piano. On Wednesday morning the keys came back, and he spent most of the day reregulating the action, which had been thrown out of whack by the new lead. He also juiced the hammer felt twice on Wednesday, more carefully than he had before. First, with the action in the piano, he punched each key with his middle finger and marked with chalk those that sounded strong enough to him—by now, only six or seven of the eighty-eight. These he avoided as he applied the juice. On the treble hammers he squeezed the juice right on top of the thin felt coverings, but in the middle and bass sections he juiced only the sides. The felt that actually strikes the string, he explained, should remain soft and springy; the hardening should take place below the surface. “When you play soft, you only hear the top of the hammer. If the top is metallic, that’s what you hear. When you play hard, you hear the bottom of the hammer. If the bottom is solid, you got a solid sound. If a boxer, even if he is a heavyweight, is playing soft, the punch don’t go no more than one inch deep, which is all padding in his glove. When he plays solid, it’s like it makes no difference whether he’s got a glove or not, because you feel the fist through. You understand? Excuse me, if I was speaking to you in Spanish I wouldn’t have to use this simple example.”

After quitting time on Wednesday, before juicing the hammers for the night, Parada slid the action into the case and punched the keys to check the piano’s progress. Its sound was noticeably brighter. “It came up, huh? Wow, listen to that, that’s really got a lot of power. Yeah, I think at this point I can tell you it’s gonna be a good piano.” On Thursday, he applied more juice to about twenty-five of the hammers, then pushed the piano out his door to be tuned. When it came back, about ten o’clock on Friday

morning, he announced that the moment of truth had arrived. He was going to the bathroom.

“Maybe it’s a routine, but every time I’m gonna make the tone, I do the same thing. I go to the bathroom, I refresh myself. I stick my head in the air, clean my glasses—in other words, kind of mentally get into it. Maybe it doesn’t do a thing, but I feel it helps me to hear better. I don’t come at it just like that, I kinda prepare myself.”

When he returned, he seated himself at the piano and explained that in juicing the hammers gradually over the past few days, he had brought the felt about as far as it would go—not far enough, for his taste, but he didn’t feel it could take much more juice without slipping past the point of diminishing tone. Now he would try to make the tone consistent throughout the scale, so that equal pressure on different keys would produce equal volume. He would harden a few hammers only minutely, adding just a few drops of juice, and would soften others, picking their felt with a hand tool that held three sewing needles.

With the action in the piano, he played his monotonous melodies with his middle finger, covering four, five, and six notes at a time, playing most notes twice in succession, moving up and down the scale, sneaking up from both sides on troublesome notes that sounded more brilliant or mellow than their neighbors—4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 6, 5, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 10, 9. Pulling the action halfway out of the piano and resting it on his lap, he attacked the overhardened hammers with a surprising amount of force, wielding his pick not from the wrist but from the elbow: ten strokes on this hammer, none on the next, three on the next. Then he slid the action back in: 9, 9, 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 12, 11, 10, 9, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12. Most of the tonal discrepancies that seemed to concern him were inaudible to me; I did notice, however, that some of the notes still had an annoying buzz. Parada explained that in these notes, the unison strings were vibrating slightly out of phase, because the hammer was not striking them at precisely the same time. “That’s what we’re gonna fix now.” One by one, on each of the two- and three-string notes, he lifted the hammer to its striking point and held it against the strings. He plucked the unison strings successively with his fingernail; if one string sounded cleanly while the others were muffled by the felt, he knew the hammer was striking the muffled strings before the others. Perhaps the hammer was erratically shaped, or perhaps the strings were not perfectly level. In either case, he remedied the situation by filing an infinitesimal amount of felt from the part of the hammer that struck the muffled string or strings. The buzzes disappeared.

35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 39, 38, 37, 38, 39, 40. In and out the action went for hours. Parada marked keys with chalk, juiced or picked or filed them, erased the marks, played some more, made more marks. He juiced a group of eight hammers, filed one. Filed one, picked another. Juiced seven, picked one. 83, 83, 84, 84, 85, 85, 86, 87, 88. He went over the action regulation for the third time. He lightly

sanded the hammers to clean them, buffed the action screws to shine them. He liberally juiced the three highest notes. Just before three o'clock, about five hours after he'd begun, he said, "Now, my friend, the action is done, and so, as far as I am concerned, is the tone."

"So," I asked—as I'd been asking all along—"how do you like it? Is it any good?" Parada didn't seem to know what to say. "I think it's good," he said. "It could be maybe a little fraction more, I would like it to have a little bit more. And that would not be normal either, because that



DISTANCES

Driving a prairie, we see a mill far off
and though clouds climbing out of the stack
pollute the air we find the sight lovely.
Horses on the rim of a distant rise
move faintly. We barely see them move
though they run wild. Or when a mile offshore
whales romp and spout, we admire
fountains in Rome, and the distant cathedral
that makes all daylit hours dawn. Artillery
lights a glorious horizon too far for us
to hear the thundering guns. We remain
out of earshot of scream.

Clouds bring rivers closer, bring closer
the homesteader's cabin, the antelope herd.
Clouds move on and the day opens to distance.
Animals are dots. They could be cattle or sheep.
Whatever, they no doubt graze safely, and sky
drums wide. Whole symphonies live between
here and a distant whatever-we-look-at.
At night, what we can't see advances
fast and armed over the quaking plain.

All things came close and harmless
first thing this morning, a new trick of light.
Let's learn that trick. If we can, it will mean
we live in this world, neighbor to goat,
neighbor to trout, and we can take comfort
in low birds that hang long enough for us
to read markings and look up names
we'll whisper to them from now on.

—Richard Hugo

would be—Maybe the next piano would not be—Put it this way: The average piano sounds this way, more or less. Some may be better, some worse. Better, yes. Worse, no. Because this is good. This is no lemon, understand? It's just a matter of opinion. My opinion of today, maybe tomorrow I change it. I will say, 'Gee, this piano is much better than I thought.' But I think this is natural. You know, for you, and knowing that guy might play it, I would like to have the most perfect piano in the world. Why don't you now hear the opinion of the other people?"

The other people were Parada's foreman, Richie Sera, who pronounced K 2571 "another winner," and Mike Nucio, the quality-control supervisor, who called it "a beautiful piano, beautiful instrument." He said, "Raymond, you're the only guy in here who makes it so you can't hear the difference when you go from double to single strings. At every break [every point where the scale is interrupted by the plate's metal bars], you can't hear the difference. That's the whole thing."

"Thank you," Parada said.

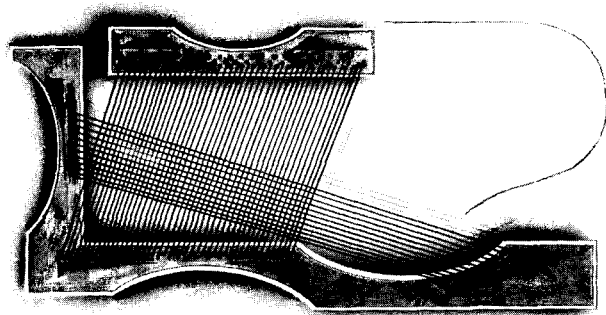
Late that afternoon, a stringer came to the tone-regulating department to replace K 2571's first three bass strings, which Richie Sera had marked as "dead" earlier in the week. Raymond Parada came back to the piano to hear the last three treble strings, which he feared would never have enough power, and expressed satisfaction that his final application of lacquer had done the trick. "They came up good," he said. Monday, the stringer came back and replaced one of the replacement strings. A man from the damper department also worked on the piano for a while, and replaced a broken wooden lever in the pedal mechanism that Parada had found a few days before. The final quality-control inspection—a rather cursory affair, since each worker in the line had depended and checked on the worker before him—took place on December 1. Two hundred and ninety-eight days after its maple had been bent in the rim department, K 2571 was finished.

Except that a piano is never truly finished. As it is played, its hammer felt is compacted and occasionally requires reshaping or softening; its action parts require continual adjustment and readjustment. Joe Bisceglie, the senior technician at the Steinway factory, likes to compare a concert piano to a finely tuned racing engine. There's a point, he said, at which it's ready to run flat out, and only the constant attention of a mechanic can keep it there. Bisceglie and his assistant, Ed Court, fine-tune the pianos that go into the "selection room," where customers come to choose their purchases; they are usually the last Steinway employees to work on large grand pianos, but only the first in a long line of tuners and technicians who will refine, restore, and sometimes undo the months of labor that have gone into them.

K 2571 went to the selection room after quality control. In the matter of André-Michel Schub's pre-Christmas musicale, it had been decided that he would choose one of three new pianos to play, and that K 2571 would be among

them. Bisceglie went over the action and the voicing, "just cleaning it up," he said, "evening it out." On December 14, the day before the recital, he characterized it as a nine, or maybe a nine and a half, out of ten. In his thirty-five years at Steinway, he said, he had seen three tens, and he remembered them well. Ed Court tuned K 2571, and rated it on his personal scale as a "concerto" instrument, not quite as powerful as an "orchestra" instrument, but more so than a "chamber" or "solo" instrument. Court emphasized that this was not faint praise; what seemed to impress him most was that the piano's tone remained clear no matter how loudly he tried to play it. "It kept coming back to me," he said. "I couldn't go through it, couldn't break it up." According to Court, Raymond Parada had come to agree with the general high opinion of K 2571. Court said, "Mr. Parada has put the word out that this is a beauty."

Shub, who would be the first artist to lay hands on K 2571, was scheduled to come to the factory late that afternoon to make his choice. The piano was sitting, in all its stately glory, in the selection room with two other model Ds. Just before the factory whistle blew to beckon the workers back from lunch, Parada stole quietly into the room to check on his baby. Wearing his winter coat and a hat with earflaps, and holding a thermos bottle in his left hand, he played his one-finger glissando with his right. He shook his head. "I knew my piano was gonna be in here today," he said. "But it's not my piano anymore. These guys been working on it. Upstairs everybody said this was a beautiful piano. Now it's not one half of what I made." He walked out disgusted. Ed Court, who was bent over another piano with his tuning wrench, said, "I'm a tone regulator myself, so I can say this: tone regulators are crazy."



THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

AS STEINWAY & SONS CHANGES FROM A FAMILY OPERATION to a corporate one, as men like Henry and John Steinway and John Bogyos yield gradually to the executives at CBS headquarters, Joe Pramberger spans the two sides—and is, in a manner of speaking, caught between them. When he sits at his desk on the second floor of the Astoria office building—something he never does for very long at a stretch—he can gaze to his left at a small plaque that proclaims him a graduate of the

CBS School of Management. To his right, behind him in a bookcase, is an old Steinway personnel book, written in a florid fountain-pen script, and inside are cards recording the employment history of some of his distant ancestors: Stephen Pramberger, hired in 1912; Ignaz Pramberger, 1916; Joseph, who started in 1913 ("fair worker, mean & grouchy at times").

Anton Pramberger, Joe's father, brought his wife and ten-year-old son to the U.S. from Yugoslavia in 1950, having arranged for a job at Steinway through a distant cousin. Young Joe joined the firm in the early 1960s; because he was studying engineering at New York University, he went to work as an assistant to John Bogyos in the engineering department. Now a slim and very young-looking forty-three, he is a constantly harried executive, the sort of person who complains a lot about the contradictions and responsibilities of his job in a way that indicates he enjoys them immensely.

By virtue of his position, Pramberger is charged by a giant corporation with the duty of looking toward the future of piano making—a future that, following the success of Japanese firms in the industry, seems bound to be influenced heavily by research and technology. I spoke with him about how he manages this in a company that tends so often to look toward the past, to tradition and handcraftsmanship. It was a question he had thought about before. In 1966, he told me, when he received his degree, he realized that Steinway's tradition of "engineering" did not jibe very well with what he had learned in school, and he thought about leaving the company.

"I was getting a little antsy, looking around," he said. "I was trained as an engineer, and to think like an engineer, and the challenges here are enormous for an engineering person—but it's also very lonely. You don't have much company as far as people who have the same technical background; in a sense you're out there by yourself. This certainly isn't a very engineering-oriented company, like, let's say, the space industry, where they're really up to snuff on the latest technological developments. Here we're light-years behind the times on using any scientific or engineering approach to problem solving. So in a sense I was learning the piano business, but I was also unlearning a lot of engineering work, because I simply wasn't practicing it. But at that point I said, well, I'll give it a try. Mainly because I was making some progress from a financial point of view, and also getting some additional responsibility."

Shortly before CBS bought Steinway & Sons, in 1972, Pramberger was made head of engineering—boss to both his father and his mentor, John Bogyos. Seven years later, he was named director of manufacturing. I asked him if the CBS takeover had caused anxiety at the factory, and if perhaps he had greeted the prospect of big corporate management a little more enthusiastically than some of his colleagues had.

"That's an interesting question," he said, "and you hit the nail right on the head. I think all of us were a little

shook up, because of the uncertainty. Not that the prospect of CBS per se was frightening, but simply the change to anybody—the transition from family ownership to ownership other than family. Some people were preaching doomsday. But interestingly, other people looked at it from the point of view that things might turn for the better.” Pramberger the engineer, of course, was among the latter group, and he does not seem to have been disappointed. Now that Steinway is part of the CBS family, he has access to the CBS Technology Center, where he can have theoretical research done to supplement the empirical methods—try it out and see how it sounds—that have always been used at Steinway. Steinway’s budget for capital improvements, reported to be around \$100,000 annually in the early 1970s, has grown eight to ten times under CBS, Pramberger said. Once I saw him walking around the factory planning to spend some of that money, acting a little like a child in a toy store. Nodding toward a worker who was performing some laborious woodworking task, he said, in a conspiratorial tone of voice, “See that job over there? I think I’ve got a way to do it faster, cheaper, and more accurately.”

Of course, “faster” and “cheaper” are not always the point at Steinway & Sons; in some cases, even the value of “more accurately” might be called into question. Though Steinway sells less than 2 percent of all the pianos sold in the United States, it sells more than 20 percent of all grand pianos, and more than 35 percent of all grands longer than six feet, one inch. Among the companies that sell significant numbers of pianos here (excluding, for example, the very expensive Bösendorfer, of Vienna), Steinway’s prices are by far the highest, exceeding those of Baldwin, the next most expensive competitor, by 30 to nearly 40 percent on roughly comparable models. Naturally, the company seeks constantly to increase its share of the market—which, in its case, is nearly synonymous with increasing production (last year, as the number of grand pianos sold in the U.S. declined by about 10 percent, the number sold by Steinway increased by almost 5 percent). At the same time, however, CBS and Steinway executives stress that the future of the company, like its past, rides on serious musicians and big spenders; the quality of the instrument, they claim, is their primary concern. Joe Pramberger, then, is the man on the spot. More than any other person in the company, he is responsible for drawing the line between progress and prostitution. I asked him to draw one such line for me, to give an example of how this dilemma translates to the floor of the factory.

“Soundboard fitting,” he said, “is one potential area of improvement. Why have somebody whittle away at the soundboard with a hand plane, when we could custom fit that board into that case by some tooling or equipment? There’s a variety of possibilities for that particular job. You can do a panograph system [a sort of mechanical tracer], or you could use possibly numerical-control units, where you would trace the inside of the rim, load this in-

formation onto a tape, and then have a tape-controlled router that would accurately mill that soundboard to the shape of that rim to the nearest thousandth of an inch—a machine that would basically duplicate what that worker is doing. But the basic method of doing the job is still the same. The soundboard has to be fitted to the case, and the plate has to be custom fitted to the soundboard and to the case. We would never change that—say, produce soundboards and cases and consider the parts interchangeable, like they do at a lot of other companies. The custom fitting would still be there. The sequence of operations, and the reasons for doing those operations as we do them now, those things are sacred. Those things I don’t touch.”

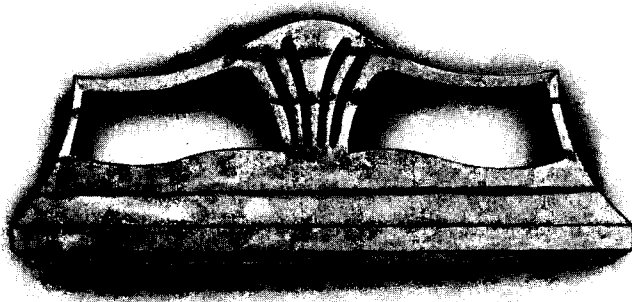
Pramberger was not directly involved with the most notorious of all Steinway design changes, but it is not likely that he will ever forget it, because it represents what for him must be one of the most frustrating aspects of his dilemma: the irrational, anti-technology bias that is the flip side of the cachet on which Steinway likes to capitalize, the cachet of tradition and handcraftmanship. In 1962, Steinway engineers made a change in their grand-piano action centers, the tiny hinges around which the action parts move. Traditionally, the metal pins that constituted these hinges were lined with bushings of cloth, to eliminate friction and other troubles that would be caused by the direct contact of metal and wood. One problem with this arrangement—a problem that piano makers had lived with for decades—was that the cloth tended to absorb moisture readily and thus to expand in conditions of high humidity, causing the action to seize up and become stiff or jerky. Steinway’s solution was the Teflon bushing, a small cylinder of hard white plastic that was virtually impermeable to moisture—too impermeable, as it turned out, for when extreme humidity changed the dimensions of the wooden parts, elongating the holes into which the bushings were set, the Teflon, unlike cloth, did not expand to fill the holes. The result, in some cases, was a gentle clicking sound that was heard round the piano world.

About two years ago, Steinway engineers began phasing out the Teflon bushing, replacing it with a new type of cloth that, they claim, combines the advantages of Teflon with those of the traditional cloth. In new Steinway grands, three of seven action centers are now made with this cloth, and by the end of this year the changeover should be complete. When the change was introduced, spokesmen insisted that the company was not returning to the technology it had abandoned in 1962; the Teflon, they said, had been an improvement over the old cloth, and the new cloth was an improvement over the Teflon. Their public pronouncements on the matter were—and remain—carefully worded to avoid giving the impression that they had finally judged the Teflon bushing a failure. One of the reasons they wish to avoid giving this impression is that when the Teflon was introduced, some critics thought that failure was precisely the word for it.

The outcry against Teflon bushings seems to have had at

least three causes. First, the company failed to account for the possibility that the Teflon bushings, like the cloth they replaced, would behave oddly in conditions of extreme humidity. Though it seems generally agreed that the Teflon performed well in a wider range of circumstances than the cloth had (Steinway stuck with the Teflon for a full eighteen years, and musicians, for the most part, stuck with Steinway), in some cases the Teflon replaced one problem, an inaudible one at that, with another. Second, Steinway executives admit, in retrospect, that they did a poor job of educating piano technicians in the proper way to service pianos with Teflon bushings. The opinions of tuners and technicians—a peripatetic, largely free-lance, and variously trained lot—can be influential, and a technician who hasn't been given the resources to deal with a new development is not very likely to have a sanguine opinion of it. Third—and here's the one that must irk Pramberger the engineer the most—it seems that some piano players reacted emotionally to the whole idea: Steinway was replacing a soft, traditional material, the cheery red cloth used by piano makers since Grandma's day, with *plastic*!

Joe Pramberger and I talked about the bushing issue, and about the public's attitude toward change and technology, one day over lunch in a restaurant near the factory. "I wonder," Pramberger said, poisoning a spoon over a bowl of minestrone: "What would have happened if we'd painted those things red?"



COMING OUT

ANDRÉ-MICHEL SCHUB DID NOT SELECT K 2571 FOR his pre-Christmas presentation. He might have, he told me, had he been choosing for a large space like Carnegie Hall, but this recital took place in the factory selection room—in four different shifts, to accommodate the more than 400 workers—and he didn't feel he needed K 2571's big, brilliant sound in such close quarters. He chose a piano with a rounder, mellower tone instead.

Franz Mohr, however, did choose it. He is the chief technician at Steinway Hall in Manhattan, and on a visit to the factory in December he took the piano off the selling block and appropriated it for use in the concert-and-artists department's New York bank of loaner pianos. On the first working day after Christmas, the piano was given a new

name—CD 129—and shipped to the labyrinthine space beneath Steinway Hall known as "the basement." There it joined such instruments as Vladimir Horowitz's current favorite (CD 75) and Rudolf Serkin's (CD 214). The Steinway & Sons logo above the keyboard, which included the company's lyre symbol, was replaced by larger letters that said only "Steinway," the better to be seen and photographed from a distance.

In the basement, one of Mohr's assistants went over the piano's action again, and Mohr himself tried to coax a little more volume from the hammers in the bass and mid-treble sections; the latter, he said, had "no carry," especially when the soft pedal was depressed. He filed a few hammers to get down to a harder layer of felt, and added small amounts of juice where the filing did not give him the brilliance he wanted. He found it a "good piano," but did not think it likely that any artist would use it for perhaps a couple of months. He said that artists can generally identify new pianos by the way they sound and feel, and often are wary of them. Most new instruments sit around the basement until visiting pianists have noodled on them sufficiently to break in their actions and hammers.

CD 129, however, did not sit around for long. In the first week of January, the pianist Thomas Schuback chose it for an RCA recording date at which he accompanied the baritone singer Hakan Hagegard. The sessions went well, the recording engineers were pleased with the piano, and Schuback scheduled it for another date in June. At the end of January, Charles Wadsworth, head of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, chose it for a February 13 concert at the Paula Cooper Gallery. Four days after that concert, Richard Goode, winner of the 1980 Avery Fisher Prize, played it at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

The piano's public debut, also at Alice Tully Hall, was a January 31 concert by Rebecca Penneys, a thirty-four-year-old professor of piano at the Eastman School of Music. Penneys rehearsed on the piano the day before the concert, and afterward she told me it had taken her only twenty minutes to select it from about a dozen pianos offered her in the basement. She was surprised when I told her how new it was. "What impressed me about it," she said, "was its versatility. I like a piano that has a big dynamic range, so you can do all sorts of things on it. This one really has a wonderful projection, and at the same time you can play very intimate things on it." Penneys said that word of good pianos usually gets around on the musicians' grapevine, and she predicted that CD 129 would be very popular. She also said that while she was rehearsing, one of the hinge pins joining the top to the case had fallen out, and that upon investigating she had found the other one loose. A stagehand secured them with gaffer's tape for the concert.

At my invitation, Raymond Parada and his wife, Eugenia, attended Penneys's concert the next night. From our seats high up in the hall, the piano looked frail and puny on the large, barren stage. Parada thought that it should have

been polished a little more thoroughly before being sent out there. "But what I am really concerned about," he said, "is the voice. I'm nervous. Whenever I hear a concert, if I like the piano, I think maybe it's mine, but this is the first time I *know* it's mine."

Penneys began with Beethoven's Sonata No. 32 in C minor, after which Parada said he liked the sound of the piano "very much." Next she played Zoltan Kodaly's *Dances of Marosszék*, and Parada advised me, "The weigh-off on this piano is very good. See, like I told you, she is able to express all her feelings, all her emotions, in beautiful music." Through a set of Chopin pieces, climaxing in a polonaise whose final chord seemed to ring through the hall for fifteen seconds, the sparse rainy-night crowd warmed to Penneys, and Parada grew increasingly proud of his baby. "I feel like it's a member of my family. My wife just asked me if I was listening to the music or the piano. I think it's more the piano." After a final Rachmaninoff sonata and a brief encore, Peter Goodrich, of Steinway's concert-and-artists department, took us backstage to meet the artist, and for Parada's benefit Penneys reiterated her prediction that CD 129 was going to be a popular piano. He turned to me proudly, reached into my shirt pocket, snatched my pencil, and handed it to Penneys so she could sign his program. "See, I told you my piano was no lemon."

If CD 129 turns out to be typical of Steinway's concert-bank pianos, it will remain in the service of professional artists for about five years, after which it will be cleaned, repaired if necessary, and sold to a university music department, a municipal orchestra or concert hall, or perhaps, as sometimes happens, to an individual who can't really afford it, and doesn't have enough room for it, but has to own it anyway. Even after several years of use, it may look to its proud new owner much as the first model D I saw looked to me—like a thing sprung whole from the imagination of some kind of artist—but if the owner is curious enough, and sufficiently mechanically inclined, to look into its innards, he or she will find behind its façade a dozen tiny testimonials to the labor of a great many people. On the black wooden block that sits at the far-bass side of the keyboard, behind the small metal plate embedded in the block's inside face, is a thin slice of wood, no bigger than a toothpick; it was glued there by Tony

Fernandez on October 16, 1981, after Paul Juganaru discovered that the bass keys did not align properly with the front of the piano. On the inner-treble side of the case, just above the simple metal spring that pushes the action bassward when the soft pedal is not depressed, there's a pencil mark made by George Zikoyannis of the grand-finishing department. Damper number seventy-one, the last one on the treble end, is only partially finished with black lacquer; the dull black ink on the side nearest the plate bar, which came from an el Marko felt-tipped pen, was put there by Earl Baldwin, who had to chisel off part of the damper so that it would clear an irregularity in the plate.

Also in there somewhere—I promised not to reveal the exact location—is a signature written in neat script with a blue Bic ball-point pen: "Raymond Parada, Tone Regulating Dept., 11/18/81."

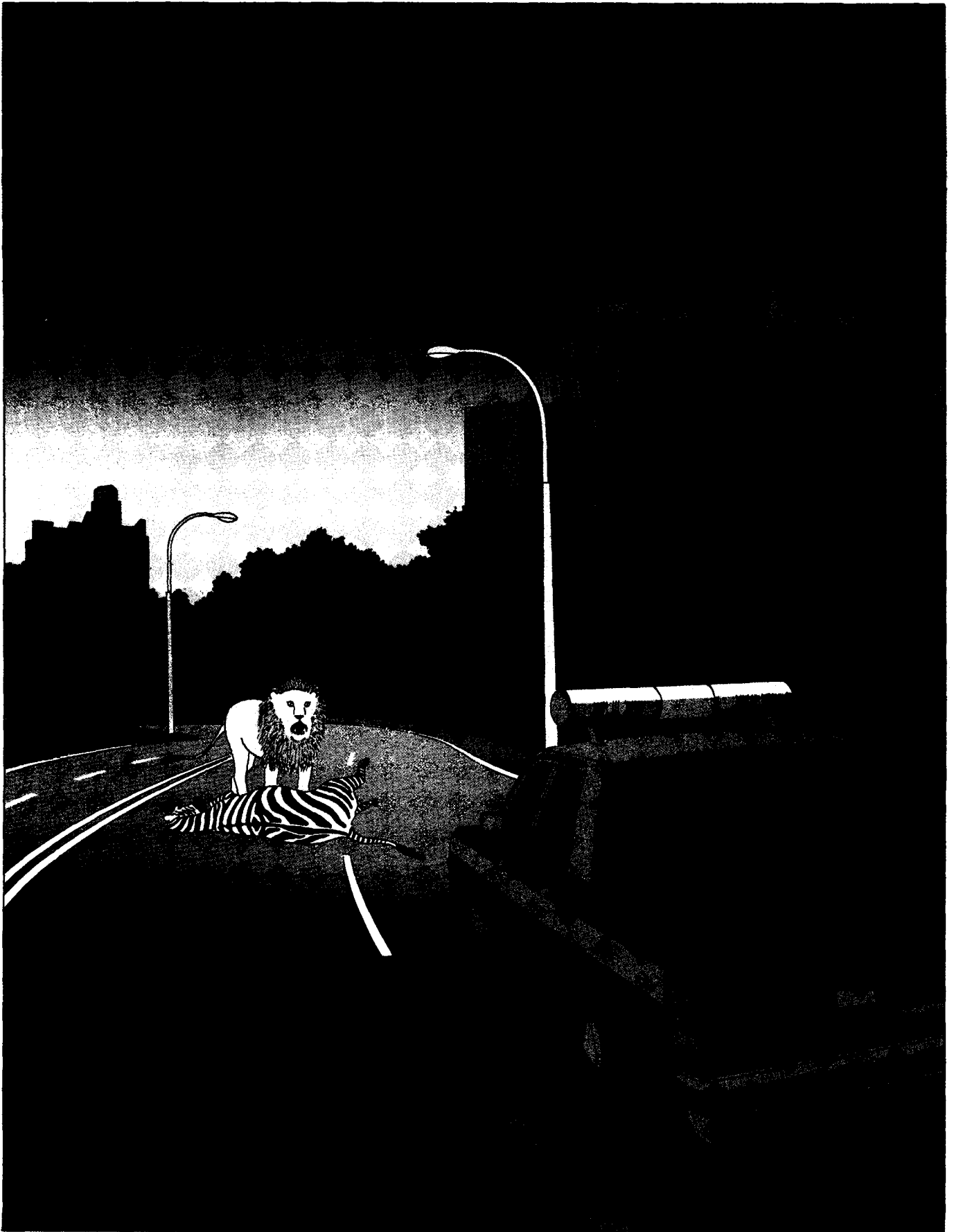
"I don't know if I should do this in front of you," Parada told me as he did the deed. "If you disclose it, I will change the place. Every piano that I make has my name hidden in it. Not only my name, but if some big event happened on that day, it has the event too. Like one piano has the date and the hour that President Kennedy was killed. I wrote that down where nobody could see it. So years from now, when the piano goes to be repaired, they will know that. The day they tried to assassinate President Reagan, I put that in there too. All the big events—not like the Yankee game and things like that, no. I mean things that are historical events. But my name, I put in every piano."

"You know why I do it? In here there used to be an old man, and one day he was working on an old piano, doing a repair job, and I went past his place and saw that he was weeping. And he told me it was because in that old piano that he was repairing, he finds his father's name, from sixty years before. His father was thirty, forty years dead already, and the piano went to who knows where, and many, many years later came to be repaired, and the son repaired that piano. And there was testimony that the father did the piano—he wrote his own name in that piano. And that felt very . . . emotional, you know? And I felt since that day that I should do the same thing—even though I don't expect my sons to see this. I want my sons to go to college. I don't want them to be like me, a piano technician, if I can help it." □



JUNGLE

BY GUY BILLOUT





THE STAUNCH MAID AND THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL TREKKIE

(hommages à Julia Child)

Stand back stand back,
Thou blob of jelly.
Do not attack
A maid so true.
I didn't pack
My Schiaparelli
To hit the sack
With a thang like you.

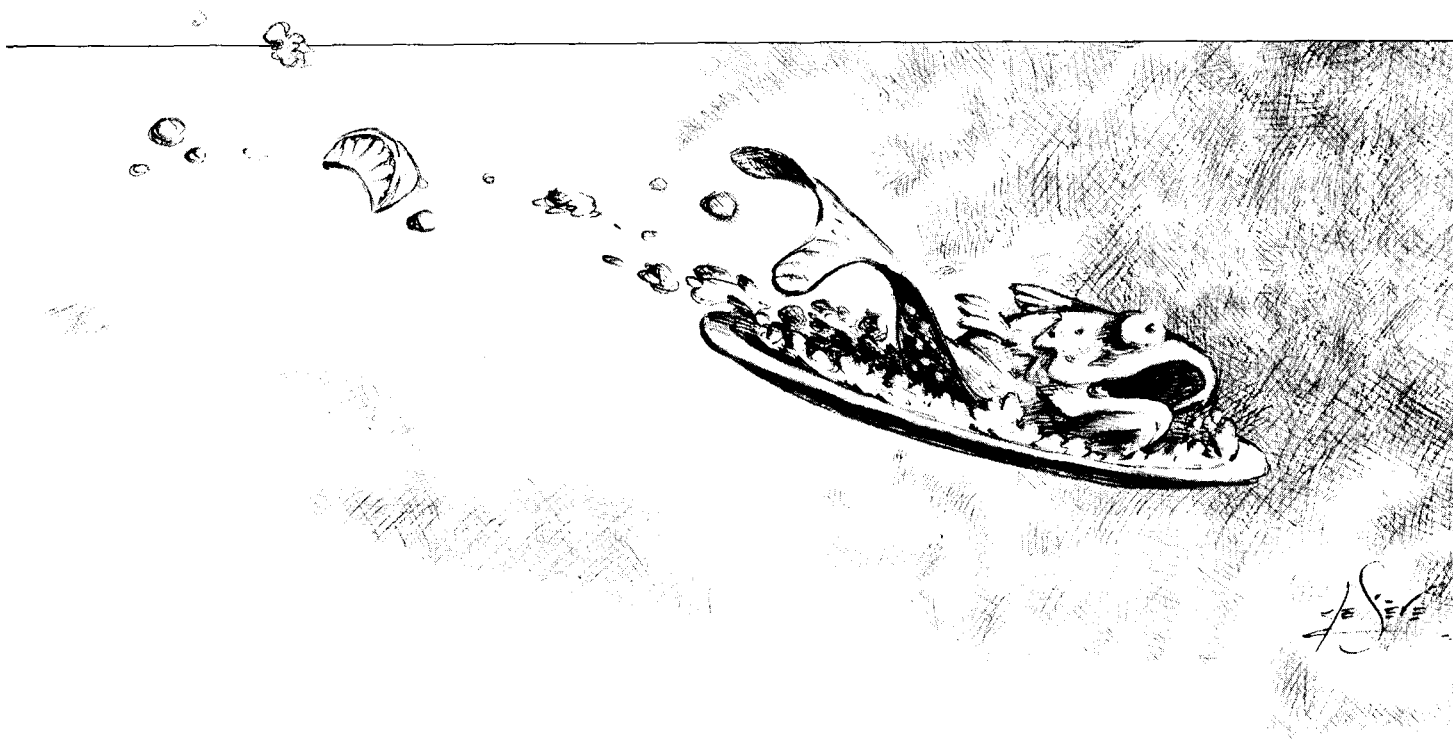
You maniac!
Go raid a deli.
Pick on a snack
Of barbecue.
A nice Cal-Jack?
Some Buoncastelli?
Here, have a daiq-
Uiri or two.

Like a Big-Mac
Machiavelli
She tossed him crack-
Ers and ragout.
She fed him rack
Of lamb, sowbelly,
Absinthe and cack-
Leberry stew.

And while she crack-
Ed the eggs and velly
Adroitly hack-
Ed the lamb in two,
Like that weird ac-
Tress on the telly,
Kept up a wack-
Y parlez-vous.

You shall not lack
For mortadelle.
You shall not lack
For pâte-à-choux.
You shall have aq-
Uavit quenelle
Mit sukiyak-
I au fondue.

But I must frac-
Ture the patellae
And baste the back-
Sides of a few
Agneaux-de-Pâques-
Avec-Mint-Jelly
Before I ac-
Quiesce to you.



Not yet you stack
Of parallely
Pulsating vac-
Uoles of goo,
You sloshing brack-
Ish stracciatelli
Of dental plaque
And doggy doo!

I said back back!
Have Mrs. Shelley
Or Countess Drac-
Ula re-do
You you great hack-
Work by Fuseli.
I'm not the quack
To unscramble you.

She threw him mac-
Kerel en gelée,
Mulled Armagnac,
Ripe Danish blue.
She staggered back.
He swore by Hell he
Had come to shack
And not soft-shoe.

Just at the ac-
Me of indeli-
Cacy and ac-
Rimony too,
While she distrac-
Ted him pellmelly,
The massed attack
Came in on cue:

Her Uncle Zack
From Pocately,
The whole *Galac-
Tica* and crew
On a Kawasak-
I-Granatelli-
Ford-Lotus trac-
Tor cab crashed through.

They had a tac
Nuke from New Delhi.
They had a black-
Snake from the zoo.
A few Kojak-
Eries from Telly.
Biff Bam Fppplt Thwack.
Poop poop a doo.

They hacked that frac-
Tious vermicelli
Till the tentac-
Ulations flew.
A rather tack-
Y, rather smelly
Business, but *chac-
Un à son goût.*

Without a knack
For belly-belly,
Without the ac-
Umen to do
Celeriac
Farcie Duxelle,
What would a crack-
Er damsel do?

—George Starbuck



THE FAMOUS POLL AT JODY'S BAR

A SHORT STORY

BY ELLEN GILCHRIST

IT WAS NINETY-EIGHT DEGREES IN THE SHADE IN NEW Orleans, a record-breaking day in August.

Nora Jane Whittington sat in a small apartment several blocks from Jody's Bar and went over her alternatives.

"No two ways about it," she said to herself, shaking out her black curls, "if Sandy wants my ass in San Jose, I'm taking it to San Jose. But I've got to get some cash."

Nora Jane was nineteen years old, a self-taught anarchist and a quick-change artist. She owned six Dynel wigs in different hair colors, a makeup kit she had stolen from Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré while working as a volunteer stagehand, and a small but versatile wardrobe. She could turn her graceful body into any character she saw in a movie or on TV. Her specialties were boyish young lesbians, boyish young nuns, and several kinds of women tourists.

Nora Jane could also do wonderful tricks with her voice, which had a range of almost two octaves. She had been the despair of the sisters at the Academy of the Most Holy Name of Jesus when she quit the choir, saying that her chores at home didn't allow her to stay after school to practice.

The sisters made special novenas for the bright, lonely child whose father had died at the beginning of the Vietnam War and whose pretty, alcoholic mother wept and prayed when they called upon her, begging her either to put away the bottle and make a decent home for Nora Jane or allow them to put her in a Catholic boarding school.

Nora Jane didn't want a decent home. What she wanted was a steady boyfriend, and the summer she graduated from high school she met Sandy. Nora Jane had a job selling records at The Mushroom Cloud, a record shop near the Tulane campus where rich kids came to spend their parents' money on records and on jewelry made in the shape of coke spoons and marijuana leaves. "The Cloud" was a nice place, up a flight of narrow stairs from Freret Street. Nora Jane felt important, helping customers decide what records to buy.

The day Sandy came into her life she was wearing a yel-

low cotton dress and her hair was curling around her face from the humidity.

Sandy walked into the shop and stood for a long time reading the backs of jazz albums. He was fresh out of a Texas reform school with \$500 in the bank and a new lease on life. He was a handsome boy with green eyes as opaque and unfathomable as a salt lake. When he smiled down at Nora Jane over a picture of Rahsaan Roland Kirk as the Five-Thousand-Pound Man, she dreamed of Robert Redford as the Sundance Kid.

"I'm going to dedicate a book of poems to this man's memory," Sandy said. "I'm going to call the book *Dark Mondays*. Did you know that Rahsaan Kirk died last year?"

"I don't know much about him. I haven't been working here long," Nora Jane said. "Are you really a writer?"

"I'm really a land surveyor, but I write poems and stories at night. In the school I went to in Texas, a poet used to come and teach my English class once a month. He said the most important writing gets done in your head while you think you're doing something else. Sometimes I write in the fields while I'm working. I sing the poems I'm writing to myself like work songs. Then at night I write them down. You really ought to listen to this album. Rahsaan Kirk is almost as good as Coltrane. A boy I went to school with is his cousin."

"I guess I have a lot to learn about different kinds of music," Nora Jane answered, embarrassed.

"I'm new in town," Sandy said, after they had talked for a while, "and I don't know many people here yet. How about going with me to a political rally this afternoon? I read in the paper that the Alliance for Good Government is having a free picnic in Audubon Park. I like to find out what's going on in politics when I get to a new town."

"I don't know if I should," Nora Jane said, trying not to smile.

"It's all right," Sandy told her. "I'm really a nice guy. You'll be safe with me. It isn't far from here and we have to walk anyway because I don't have a car, so if you don't like it you can just walk away. If you'll go I'll wait for you after work."

"I guess I should go," Nora Jane said. "I need to know what's going on in politics myself."

When Nora Jane was through for the day, they walked

Ellen Gilchrist lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas. This story originally appeared in New Orleans Review and in her collection, In the Land of Dreamy Dreams, which was recently published by the University of Arkansas Press.

to Audubon Park and ate free fried chicken and listened to the Democratic candidate for the House of Representatives debate the Republican candidate.

It was still light when they walked back through the park in the direction of Sandy's apartment. Nora Jane was telling Sandy the story of her life. She had just gotten to the sad part where her father died when Sandy stopped and put his hands around her waist.

"Wait just a minute," he said, and he walked over to the roots of an enormous old live-oak tree and began to dig a hole with the heel of his boot. When he had dug down about six inches in the hard-packed brown soil, he took out all the change he had in his pockets, wrapped it in a dollar bill, and buried it in the hole. He packed the dirt back down with his hands and looked up at her.

"Remember this spot," he said. "You might need this someday."

Many hours later, in his room, Nora Jane reached out and touched his arm where he stood leaning into the window frame, watching the moon in the cloudy sky.

"Do you want to stay here for a while?" he asked, without looking at her.

"I want to stay here for a long time," she answered, taking a chance.

She stayed for fourteen months.

Sandy taught her how to listen to jazz, how to bring a kite down without tearing it, how to watch the sun set on the Mississippi River, how to make macrame plant holders out of kite string, and how to steal things.

Stealing small things from elegant uptown gift shops was as easy as walking down a tree-lined street. Pulling off robberies was another thing. Nora Jane drove the borrowed getaway car three times, when Sandy cleaned out a drugstore and two beauty parlors in remote parts of Jefferson Parish. The last of these jobs supplied her with the wigs. Sandy picked them up for her on his way out.

"I'm heading for the West Coast," he told her, when the beauty-parlor job turned out to be successful beyond his wildest dreams, netting them \$723. He had lucked into a payroll.

"I'll send for you as soon as I get settled," he said, and he lifted her over his head like a flower and carried her to the small iron bed and made love to her while the afternoon sun and then the moonlight poured in the low windows of the attic apartment.

Robbing a neighborhood bar in uptown New Orleans in broad daylight all by herself was another thing entirely. Nora Jane thought that up for herself. It was the plan she settled upon as the quickest way to get to California. She planned it for weeks, casing the bar at different times of the day and night in several disguises, and even dropping by one Saturday afternoon pretending to be collecting money to help the Crippled Children's Hospital. She collected almost ten dollars.

Nora Jane had never been out of the state of Louisiana, but once she settled on a plan of action she was certain that

all she needed was a little luck and she was as good as wading in the Pacific Ocean. One evening's work and her hands would be back in Sandy's hair.

She crossed herself and prayed for divine intervention. After all, she told herself, robbing an old guy who sold whiskey and laid bets on athletic events was part of an anarchist's work. Nora Jane didn't like old guys much anyway. They were all wrinkled where the muscles ought to be, and they were so sad.

She took the heavy stage pistol out of its hiding place under the sink and inspected it. She practiced looking tough for a few minutes and then replaced the gun in its wrapper and sat down at the card table to go over her plans.

Nora Jane had a methodical streak and liked to take care of details.

"THE FIRST NIGGER THAT COMES IN HERE ATTEMPTING a robbery is going to be in the wrong place." Jody laughed, smiling at Judge Crozier and handing him a fresh bourbon and Coke across the bar.

"Yes, sir, that nigger is gonna be in the wrong place." Jody fingered the blackjack that lay in its purple velvet sack on a small shelf below the antiquated cash register and warmed to his favorite subject—local crime. His interest had been fueled by a report in the *Times-Picayune* of a holdup in a neighborhood Tote-Sum store.

The black bandits had made the customers lie on the floor, cleaned out the cash register, and helped themselves to a cherry Icee on the way out. The newspaper carried a photograph of the Icee machine.

The Judge popped open his third sack of barbecue potato chips and looked thoughtful. The other customers waited politely to see what he had to say for himself this morning concerning law and order.

"Now, Jody, you don't know how a man will act in an emergency until that emergency transpires," the Judge began, wiping his hands on his worn seersucker pants. "That's a fact and worthy of all good men to be accepted. Your wife could be in here helping tend bar. Your tables could be full of innocent customers watching a ball game. First thing you know, gun in your back, knife at your throat. It has nothing at all to do with being brave." The Judge polished off his drink and turned to look out the door to where the poll was going on.

JODY'S BAR DIDN'T CATER TO JUST ANYONE WHO HAP- pened to drop by to get a drink or lay a bet. It was the oldest neighborhood bar in the Irish Channel section of New Orleans, and its regular customers included second- and third-generation drinkers from many walks of life. Descendants of Creole blue bloods mingled easily with house painters and deliverymen stopping by for a quick one on their route.

Jody ran a notoriously tight ship. No one but Jody himself had ever answered the telephone, which sat beneath a framed copy of the Auburn Creed, and no woman, no matter what her tale of woe, had ever managed to get him to call a man to the phone.

"Not here," he would answer curtly. "Haven't seen him." And Jody would hang up without offering to take a message. If a woman wanted a man at Jody's, she had to come look for him in person.

There was an air of anticipation around Jody's this Saturday morning. All eight of the stools were filled. The excitement was due to the poll.

Outside of Jody's, seated at a small card table underneath a green-and-white-striped awning, Wesley Labouisse was proceeding with the poll in a businesslike manner. Every male passerby was interviewed in turn, and his ballot folded into quarters and deposited in the Mason jar with a pink ribbon from an old valentine's box wrapped loosely around it.

"Just mark it yes or no. Whatever advice you would give

your closest friend if he came to you and told you he was thinking of getting married." Wesley was talking to a fourteen-year-old boy straddling a ten-speed bike.

"Take all the time you need to make up your mind. Think about your mother and father. Think about what it's like to have a woman tell you when to come home every night and when to get up in the morning and when to take a bath and when to talk and when to shut up. Think about what it's like to give your money to a woman from now till the day you die. Then just write down your honest feelings about whether a perfectly happy man ought to go out and get himself married."

Wesley was in a good mood. He had thought up the poll himself and had side bets laid all the way from the New Orleans Country Club to the Plaquemines Parish sheriff's office.

There was a big sign tacked up over the card table, declaring: THIS POLL IS BEING CONDUCTED WITHOUT REGARD TO SEX OR PREVIOUS CONDITION OF SERVITUDE. Wesley had made the sign himself and



STUMP SPEECH

This is the bark, which is always dead.

This is the phloem, which only lives
To carry sunlight down from the leaves,
Then dies into bark, which is always dead.

This is the cambium. Every year
It thickens another ring to wear
And swells the phloem, which only lives
To carry sunlight down from the leaves,
Then dies into bark, which is always dead.

This is the xylem. It lifts the rain
Two hundred feet from root to vein
Out of a cambium well. Each year
It thickens another ring to wear
And swells the phloem, which only lives
To carry sunlight down from the leaves,
Then dies into bark, which is always dead.

This is the heartwood, once locked in
As hard as iron by pitch and resin
Inside the xylem that lifted rain
Two hundred feet from root to vein,
Now soft as cambium out to where
It thickened a final ring to wear,
Then shrank like the phloem that swelled with life
Called down like sunlight from each leaf
Behind the bark, which is always dead.

And this is the stump I stand beside,
Once tall, now short as the day it died
And gray as driftwood, its heartwood eaten
By years of weather, its xylem rotten
And only able to hold the rain
One cold inch (roots withered and gone)
In a shallow basin, a cracked urn
Whose cambium and phloem now learn
To carry nothing down to the dark
Inside the broken shell of the bark
But a dream of a tree forever dead.

And this is the speech that grew instead.

—David Wagoner

thought it was hilarious. He was well known in New Orleans society as the author of Boston Club Mardi Gras skits.

The leading man in the drama of the poll, Prescott Hamilton IV, was leaning into Jody's pinball machine with the dedication of a ballet dancer winding up *The Firebird*. He was twelve games ahead, and his brand-new, navy-blue wedding suit hung in its plastic see-through wrapper on the edge of the machine, swaying in rhythm as Prescott nudged the laws of pinball machines gently in his favor. He was a lucky gambler and an ace pinball player. He was a general favorite at Jody's, where the less aristocratic customers loved him for his gentle ways and his notoriously hollow leg.

Prescott wasn't pretending to be more interested in the outcome of the pinball game than in the outcome of the poll that was deciding his matrimonial future. He was genuinely more interested in the pinball game. Prescott had great powers of concentration and was a man who lived in the present.

Prescott didn't really care whether he married Emily Anne Hughes or not. He and Emily Anne had been getting along fine for years without getting married, and he didn't see what difference his moving into Emily Anne's house at this late date was going to make in the history of the world.

Besides, he wasn't certain how his Labradors would adjust to her back yard. Emily Anne's house was nice, but the yard was full of little fences and lacked a shade tree.

Nonetheless, Prescott was a man of his word, and if the poll came out in favor of marriage, they would be married as soon as he could change into his suit and find an Episcopal minister, unless Emily Anne would be reasonable and settle for the Judge.

Prescott was forty-eight years old. The wild blood of his pioneer ancestors had slowed down in Prescott. Even his smile took a long time to develop, feeling out the terrain, then opening up like a child's.

"Crime wave, crime wave, that's all I hear around this place anymore," the Judge muttered, tapping his cigar on the edge of the bar and staring straight at the rack of potato chips. "Let's talk about something else for a change."

"Judge, you ought to get Jody to take you back to the ladies' room and show you the job Claiborne did of patching the window so kids on the street can't see into the ladies'," one of the regulars said. Two or three men laughed, holding their stomachs.

"Claiborne owed Jody sixty bucks on his tab and the window was broken out in the ladies' room, so Jody's old lady talked him into letting Claiborne fix the window to pay back part of the money he owes. After all, Claiborne is supposed to be a carpenter." Everyone started laughing again.

"Well, Claiborne showed up about six sheets to the wind last Wednesday, while Jody was out jogging in the park, and he went to work. You wouldn't believe what he did. He

boarded up the window. He didn't feel like going out for a windowpane, so he just boarded up the window with scrap lumber."

"I'll have to see that as soon as it calms down around here," the Judge said, and he turned to watch Prescott, who was staring passionately into the lighted TILT sign on the pinball machine.

"What's wrong, Prescott," he said, "you losing your touch?"

"Could be, Judge," Prescott answered, slipping another quarter into the slot.

THE LATE-AFTERNOON SUN SHONE IN THE WINDOWS of the bare apartment. Nora Jane had dumped most of her possessions into a container for the Volunteers of America. She had even burned Sandy's letters. If she was caught, there was no sense in involving him.

If she was caught, what could they do to her, a young girl, a first offender, the daughter of a hero? The sisters would come to her rescue. Nora Jane had carefully been attending early-morning mass for several weeks.

She trembled with excitement and glanced at her watch. She shook her head and walked over to the mirror on the dresser. Nora Jane couldn't decide if she was frightened or not. She looked deep into her eyes in the mirror, trying to read the secrets of her mind, but Nora Jane was too much in love to know her own secrets. She was inside a mystery deeper than the mass.

She inspected the reddish-blond wig with its cascades of silky Dynel falling around her shoulders, and blinked her black eyelashes. To the wig and eyelashes she added blue eye shadow, peach rouge, and beige lipstick. Nora Jane looked awful.

"You look like a piece of shit," she said to her reflection, adding another layer of lipstick. "Anyway, it's time to go."

On weekends, six o'clock was the slow hour at Jody's, when most of the customers went home to change for the evening.

Nora Jane walked down the two flights of stairs and out onto the sidewalk, carrying the brown leather bag. Inside was her costume change and a bus ticket to San Francisco zippered into a side compartment. The gun was stuffed into one of the Red Cross shoes she had bought to wear with the short brown nun's habit she had stolen from Dominican College. She hoped the short veil wasn't getting wrinkled. Nora Jane was prissy about her appearance.

As she walked along in the August evening, she dreamed of Sandy sitting on her bed, playing his harmonica while she pretended to sleep. In the dream he was playing an old Bob Dylan love song, the sort of thing she had liked to listen to before he had upgraded her taste in music.

Earlier that afternoon, Nora Jane had rolled a pair of shorts, an old shirt, and some sandals into a neat bundle

and hidden it in the low-hanging branches of the oak tree where Sandy had planted the money.

A scrawny-looking black kid was dozing among the roots of the tree. He promised to keep an eye on her things.

"If I don't come back by tomorrow afternoon, you can have this stuff," she told him. "The sandals were hand-made in Brazil."

"Thanks," the black kid said. "I'll watch it for you till then. You running away from home or what?"

"I'm going to rob a bank," she confided.

The black kid giggled and shot her the old peace sign.

WESLEY WALKED INTO THE BAR, WHERE PRESCOTT, Jody, and the Judge were all alone, watching the evening news on television.

"Aren't you getting tired of that goddamn poll?" Prescott said to him. "Emily Anne won't even answer her phone. A joke's a joke, Wesley. I better put on my suit and get on over there."

"Not yet," Wesley said. "The sun isn't all the way down yet. Wait till we open the jar. You promised." Prescott was drunk but Wesley was drunker. Not that either of them ever showed his whiskey.

"I promised I wouldn't get married unless you found one boy or man all day who thought it was an unqualified good idea to get married. I didn't ever say I was interested in waiting around for the outcome of a vote. Come on and open up that jar before Emily Anne gets any madder."

"What makes you think there is a single ballot in favor of you getting married?" Wesley asked.

"I don't know if there is or there isn't," Prescott answered. "So go on and let the Judge open that goddamn jar."

"Look at him, Wesley," Jody said delightedly. "He ain't even signed the papers yet and he's already acting like a married man. Already worried about getting home in time for dinner. If Miss Emily Anne Hughes wakes up in the morning wearing a ring from Prescott, I say she takes the cake. I say she's gone and caught a whale on a ten-pound test line."

"Open the jar," Prescott demanded, while the others howled with laughter.

Nora Jane stepped into the bar, closed the door behind her, and turned the lock. She kept the pistol pointed at the four men who were clustered around the cash register.

"Please be quiet and put your hands over your heads before I kill one of you," she said politely, waving the gun

with one hand and reaching behind herself with the other to draw the window shade that said CLOSED in red letters.

Prescott and the Judge raised their hands first, then Wesley.

"Do as you are told," the Judge said to Jody in his deep voice. "Jody, do what that woman tells you to do and do it this instant." Jody added his hands to the six already pointing at the ceiling fan.

"Get in there," Nora Jane directed, indicating the ladies' room at the end of the bar. "Please hurry before you make me angry. I ran away from DePaul's Hospital yesterday afternoon and I haven't had my medication and I become angry very easily."

The Judge held the door open, and the four men crowded into the small bathroom.

"Face the window," Nora Jane ordered, indicating Clai-borne's famous repair job. The astonished men obeyed silently as she closed the bathroom door and turned the skeleton key in its lock and dropped it on the floor under the bar.

"Please be very quiet so I won't get worried and need to shoot through the door," she said. "Be awfully quiet. I am an alcoholic and I need some of this whiskey. I need some whiskey in the worst way."

Nora Jane changed into the nun's habit, wiping the makeup off her face with a bar rag and stuffing the old clothes into the bag. Next she opened the cash register, removed all the bills without counting them, and dropped them into the bag. On second thought, she added the pile of IOUs and walked back to the door of the ladies' room.

"Please be a little quieter," she said in a husky voice. "I'm getting very nervous."

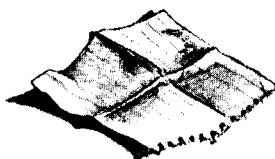
"Don't worry, miss. We are cooperating to the fullest extent," the Judge's bench voice answered.

"That's nice," Nora Jane said. "That's very nice."

She pinned the little veil to her hair, picked up the bag, and walked out the door. She looked all around, but there was no one on the street but a couple of kids riding tricycles.

As she passed the card table she stopped, marked a ballot, folded it neatly, and dropped it into the Mason jar.

Then, like a woman in a dream, she walked on down the street, the rays of the setting sun making her a path all the way to the bus stop at the corner of Nashville and Annunciation. Making her a path all the way to mountains and valleys and fields, to rivers and streams and oceans. To a boy who was like no other. To the source of all water. □





*A psychologist argues that the press
won't report both sides of the IQ controversy*

IQ TESTING AND THE MEDIA

BY R. J. HERRNSTEIN

IN JUNE OF 1973, I SPOKE AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE TO A small audience of students, visitors, and at least one reporter. My topic was press coverage of the IQ controversy, which I thought distorted to the point of newsworthiness. After my talk, the reporter, from *The Boston Globe*, asked me to substantiate my criticisms of the press. I sent him a bundle of clippings that I thought amply documented my charge. A few weeks later his article, putatively about my Wellesley talk, appeared. It was 300 column lines long, but it contained no mention of press coverage of

the IQ controversy. Instead, the article, obviously based on interviews with my critics, attacked what I had said or written about IQ in other places. The article said nothing about my answers to these critics, and nothing about the content of my actual talk at Wellesley College.

When I called him to object, the reporter said that his editors intended to invite me to write a rejoinder. Later on, pleading a shortage of space, the reporter told me I would have no chance to answer. When I complained to one of that newspaper's senior editors, he told me he had just rejected an article highly critical of me and my position. At some point, he implied, arguments about IQ, whatever their position, become tedious. I wrote again neverthe-

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less, disputing his decision and his reasons for it. A few days later, the *Globe* published an article by a sociologist teaching at Princeton that accused me, falsely, of racism.

Unfortunately, this encounter with the press resembles a great many others. A few weeks before my talk at Wellesley College, I had been in New York at the invitation of *Social Policy*, a leftist magazine with a record of antipathy toward IQ testing and its social implications. My condition for accepting the invitation to participate in a debate on IQ was that I be shown in advance any press release advertising the debate, for I feared being misrepresented. The press release the editors sent me was acceptable, but I may have been the only person to get it. Reporters from *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, and other media received a different press release, attributing to me racist and sexist beliefs. In my talk, I described how my hosts had set the scene, but only *The New York Post* told the story of the counterfeit press release.

One would hope that America's newspaper of record, *The New York Times*, had higher standards. Perhaps it does in general, but my impression is that it doesn't on the IQ controversy. On December 17, 1975, for example, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, in his daily book review, praised two now largely forgotten books, both attacking IQ testing.

Since Lehmann-Haupt mentioned me for special disapproval, I thought I had a right to correct some of his errors. An editor I called agreed and invited me to do an Op-Ed piece, which I promptly wrote. A week later, in a letter rejecting my article, the editor said:

Many thanks for your thoughts. . . . We think you're right to be outraged by that review, but we don't think it's right for us simply to engage in a direct polemic with a book review in the daily paper. Also . . . the basic argument is by now familiar. . . .

But we love the way you write and think and we would love to capitalize on your approach to us to go beyond this topic . . . In any case, the purpose of this letter is not to be negative—quite the contrary. We want to sign you up for a good long piece in which you could make not only this point but many others, depending on the flow of your work.

Instead of 1,200 words on the Op-Ed page, I was to get about 6,000 words in the Sunday magazine: not a bad exchange, I thought. After a further conversation defining the scope of the longer article, I set to work, and a few weeks later I mailed a draft in for comment. Six weeks passed without a word from the *Times*. I then called the Sunday magazine's editor, who bluntly rejected the article because, he said, everyone already knew what, in substance, it had to say about IQ. Several months later, the Sunday magazine published an article by an economist criticizing IQ tests, not as harshly as Lehmann-Haupt had, but making some of the very same errors.

Incurably addicted to quantification, I have now searched the daily and Sunday *New York Times* from 1975 to November of 1981 for all book reviews dealing with IQ. Of the fifteen reviews that I found, every one denigrated IQ tests, often vitriolically. All but two of the books reviewed were opposed to testing, as far as one can tell from the reviews, and were praised for their position. One of the exceptions was a book by Arthur Jensen, which happened also to be the only book by a trained psychometrician (psychometrics is the psychological specialty concerned with testing). Jensen's book was panned by a philosopher with no detectable expertise in the subject.

Except for Jensen's book, none of the major works on testing written by professionals during the period was reviewed. Most remarkable, however, the *Times* published no review by a trained psychometrician. Dozens of literate psychometricians might have commented on the shallowness of the books the *Times* usually chooses to review. But psychometrics is forbidden territory in the *Times*—books in the field are mostly unreviewed, its discoveries are unreported, and its experts are, apparently, unconsulted. Rarely, if ever, in more than a decade, has a specialist in psychometrics published a review of a book on testing in the *Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, or other national publications that occasionally comment on testing. For no other subject of public concern—not for economic policy, disarmament, welfare reform, nuclear-power plants—has the professional outlook on a controversy been so shut off from a voice in the national press. Yet, while public policy on testing may not have the immediacy of a tax cut or a nuclear accident, it ultimately affects everyone, as I will try to show.

The one-sided debate about IQ misleads the public and trivializes the subject. Books conceived in ignorance or misunderstanding are evaluated by reviewers who usually know even less. For example, it is often said that testing assumes that intelligence can be quantified by a single number, as in a much-praised recent book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, by a paleontologist, Stephen Jay Gould. To such authors and their newspaper and magazine reviewers, so wrongheaded an assumption must stem from defects in the thought—and perhaps also the character—of testers. The truth, however, is that psychometrics has plainly shown that intelligence is multi-dimensional: people with the same IQ may have different mixtures of abilities. Consequently, for many purposes, tests provide profiles, not a single IQ. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, for example, which is widely used as an IQ test, can be scored to yield a profile of eleven subscales. Other test batteries result in still larger numbers of dimensions of intellectual variation. To tell the public, as the critics often do, that testers assume intelligence to be one-dimensional is simply to misinform.

At the same time, the public hears little about a surprising and important discovery—not an assumption—of psy-

chometrics. Tests show that many intellectual activities are highly correlated. People who are good at seeing the figure-ground relationships in pictures tend also to be good at sentence-completion exercises, word analogies, problem solving, and so on. Superficially the activities differ, but at a deeper level they converge. Indeed, about 50 percent of the variation from person to person in mental activities can be attributed to variation in the strength of a single attribute, which, because of the great diversity of its expression, is called *g*, for general intelligence. A person's level of *g* has ramifications for everyday life—in school, at work, and in personal matters. Because a standard IQ score is usually a good measure of *g*, it efficiently tells us something important. The structure of intelligence reveals itself spontaneously in the way people behave intellectually; it is not imposed by the assumptions of testers, as the national press would have it.

My most recent experience with the *Times* was in early 1979, after it published its fifth article, by my count, about the case of Sir Cyril Burt. Repetitions of the Burt story have appeared several times in its pages since. Not just in the *Times* but in the newsweeklies, in *Science* magazine (official publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science), on national TV news programs, even on the hourly news programs on our local radio station, I kept running into the Burt story, again and again. Everyone has no doubt read, seen, or heard a Cyril Burt story or two, but the true story is much harder to find. When *Science* published a psychologist's statistical analysis of Burt's data, concluding that it revealed traces of deliberate fraud, *The New York Times* reported the story. When, shortly thereafter, *Science* published a rejoinder by a statistician, reducing the psychologist's analysis to shambles, the *Times* reported nothing. The familiar story is that Sir Cyril invented data to prove that IQ scores are influenced by heredity; once the hoax is exposed, say Burt's detractors, the genetic case collapses.

The fifth telling of this tale in the *Times*, by its education editor, prompted me to submit a more accurate account, pointing out that most psychometricians had stopped trusting Burt's data years before, partly because of inconsistencies first noted in a 1974 article by Arthur Jensen. In his later years, Burt published articles that claimed to be presenting new data but that were probably just rehashes or fictitious confirmations of his earlier results. We can believe to some extent in his earlier findings because they were often the first of their kind and have since been confirmed in many other studies, but for that very reason Burt's data are expendable. Removing them from the scientific literature would change no important conclusions about the genetic contribution to intellectual development, for if Burt fabricated data, he apparently knew enough to guess correctly. Obviously, it matters that many studies beyond suspicion support Burt's arguments on behalf of the hereditarian position, but my attempt to say so in a short essay, after countless misleading renditions in all the

popular media, was rejected without explanation by the *Times*.

Reporters from *Science* and *Time* magazines, in spite of my urgings, declined to mention in their articles that Burt's major conclusions have been and continue to be confirmed. For reasons to be outlined later, these reporters appear to want to discredit an entire scientific literature, when the true Burt story would discredit, at most, a single contributor to it.

No time for this conference. I'm to make 3pm flight. Dismissed.

A STORY NEGLECTED SOMETIMES DAMAGES THE truth more than a story mistold does. On July 30, 1981, Richard Heber and an associate were convicted in a federal court in Madison, Wisconsin, of numerous counts of diverting institutional funds; later they were sentenced to three years in prison. A few months later, a state court sentenced Heber to four additional years. Heber is serving his three-year term in a federal prison in Bastrop, Texas. Thus ended an episode of incomparably greater meaning for testing than all of Burt's lapses, proven or suspected. But not a word about the Heber scandal has appeared in the *Times*, the newsweeklies, *Science* magazine, or on national TV.

Heber was, until the scandal broke in December of 1980, director of the Center on Mental Retardation and Human Development at the University of Wisconsin. He had chaired President Kennedy's Panel on Mental Retardation in the early 1960s, and had held other responsible positions in the field of intellectual development and compensatory education. Heber is better known, however, for his direction of the Milwaukee Project, an intensive educational and child-care intervention program supported by the federal government, in which the IQs of preschool ghetto children were supposedly raised by more than thirty points. When the President's Committee on Mental Retardation proclaimed in the early 1970s that the intellectual similarity of parents and children was "mainly because of the environment that the parents create for the young child," the decisive evidence was Heber's Milwaukee Project. Here, the committee claimed, was evidence that by intervening directly in the environment, education specialists could raise the IQs of ghetto children to an average of over 125 points. These contentions in the committee's report were echoed in the national press, which consistently asserts that the environment is primarily, perhaps solely, responsible for the lower IQs of economically deprived groups.

Needless to say, the scientific community has been eager from the start to scrutinize Heber's work. Reading about it in the popular press is no substitute for the scrutiny that follows the disclosure required by technical journals. But more than fourteen years after the Milwaukee Project started, and long after its spokesman's claims have been absorbed into the consciousness of editors, politicians, judges, school boards, parents, and social theorists, as well as into countless textbooks and lecturers' notes, no scientific account has been published. A few unpublished annual reports and fragmentary descriptions are all we have to weigh against the claims made by Heber and those who cite him.

From the sketchy results available, some experts think they see flaws in the study, in the sampling and testing procedures especially. But the plain truth is that we cannot say what was really done for the children or what the results were. The Milwaukee Project broke into the national news when a writer named S. P. Strickland implied, in the July 1971 issue of *American Education*, a federally sponsored magazine, that the IQs of children in Heber's study had been raised by 33 points. Soon thereafter, *Time* magazine told its readers that the Milwaukee Project "offers persuasive evidence that mental retardation in the offspring of mentally retarded mothers can be prevented." In a syndicated article that ran all over the country, *The Washington Post* summarized Strickland's disclosures:

Prof. Rick Heber's group at the University of Wisconsin may have settled once and for all the question of whether the disproportionate mental retardation of slum children is the result of heredity or environment.

Heber's study, the *Post* said,

revealed not that mental deficiencies are passed on genetically, but that mentally retarded mothers tend to create an environment that is less conducive to mental development than that created by slum neighbors of normal intelligence.

The New York Times told its readers:

The Milwaukee Project, an experiment in intensive preschool education for [potentially retarded] children, has proved that they can be raised more than 30 test points higher than other children from the same environment and with same type of mother.

More than ten years passed before a reporter at the *Capital Times* of Madison discovered that Mr. Strickland, in mid-1971, had become a stockholder and officer in a corporation set up by Heber to sell the very techniques of educational intervention that Strickland credited in his article. But this was a minor revelation, compared with the ones that convicted Heber. A series of *Capital Times* articles, from January to October of 1981, paints a picture of flamboyant misconduct. Heber and an associate, Patrick Flanigan, diverted at least \$165,000 of their center's money into personal bank deposits. Heber's legal residence

was just outside Colorado Springs, though he was paid for "full-time" duties in Madison, Wisconsin. Colleagues were quoted as saying that Heber was rarely seen on campus. He owned hundreds of acres of land in Wisconsin, Iowa, Florida, and Colorado, and was busy in the horse-raising business, which must have involved substantial time, travel, and capital.

Heber's grants from the federal government for raising IQs totaled in the millions of dollars, much more than the usual federal funding level, and the results he claimed were comparably out of the ordinary. While other workers have published careful studies showing modest, often transitory, benefits of training for IQ, Heber's project stood as a beacon of hope for dramatic and lasting benefits, and also as the prime evidence against those who say that the IQ has proved disappointingly hard to budge. But the national press, which found Cyril Burt interminably fascinating, has published nothing about the ambiguity surrounding the Milwaukee Project. The media seem unwilling to publish anything that might challenge the certitude with which editors, politicians, judges, and others insist that we know how to increase measurable intelligence, or that test data "prove," to use *The New York Times's* word, that a poor environment causes familial retardation.

SOMETIMES THE PRESS CREATES CONTROVERSY where none exists. An example is an article, published in *Newsweek* in 1973, reviewing a book by Arthur Jensen. The review was a mild one, but it contained the following sentence: "And [Jensen] predicts that education will eventually be realigned as he suggests—with different curricula and methods for poor and black children." But Jensen has always advocated individualized education, tailored as much as possible to the abilities and interests of each child. The greater the individual variation in abilities and interests, the greater the benefits of individualized instruction and the greater the harm of educational uniformity, within any social class or ethnic group. *Newsweek's* characterization could hardly have been more alien to Jensen's views; more important, it might easily be taken as a suggestion that Jensen was guilty of elitism and racism.

I wrote to *Newsweek's* reviewer (an education editor), Jerrold Footlick, to try to explain the error he had made and to persuade him to correct it. His response granted my point by illustrating it with passages from Jensen, but added:

It seems clear, from these passages and others, that Professor Jensen believes in individualizing education. But from his discussions of our over-emphasis on egalitarianism and from his discussions of different patterns of learning among different social classes, it seems fair to suggest that he believes many poor and black children might need different curricula and methods. I trust that

the fact that *some* of them might not fit this description is too obvious to require saying.

Thus, to repeat, I do not consider this a serious error. I do not think the review did an injustice to Professor Jensen, and as far as I know, he did not think so either.

The reviewer evidently knew Jensen's actual position, but apparently not that Jensen objects to "egalitarianism" for scientific, not political, reasons. If children differ, and if education is to be individualized, then schools cannot be "egalitarian." Moreover, the reviewer's suggestion that Jensen was not bothered by the review surprised me, and I checked it with Jensen. Not only was he upset about the quoted passage, Jensen said, but he had heard from a half-dozen colleagues around the country who had complained to *Newsweek* and had, as I had, sent a letter to the editor. None of these letters was ever published, nor was any correction by *Newsweek's* writers. I wrote an additional letter to *Newsweek's* editor-in-chief, also unanswered. The false record thus stands, obscuring Jensen's views in a smoke screen of controversy.

By itself, the *Newsweek* review was not momentous, but multiply its theme a thousand times in a thousand news stories and the result may help explain why American public education is in trouble. To avoid the stigma of "Jensenism," as the press depicts it, educators must deny significant individual differences in test scores if they are correlated with race or class. But those differences persist, and to deny them is to deny a reality that educational systems cannot ignore without penalty. When education is turned over to those who either do not know how children vary or are willing to ignore that variation, at least in public, the result works about as well as would a public-health policy that ignored individual differences in health. In the case of education, the cost of ignoring individual differences falls most heavily on the disadvantaged, the very people whose interest the *Newsweek* editor doubtless thought he was serving.

THE CLAIM THAT IQ IS HERITABLE APPEARS TO PROVOKE controversy at every turn. But, as controversial as that claim may seem to readers of the national press, it is an ersatz controversy, a creation of the press itself. In the technical literature, virtual unanimity reigns: most of the variation among individual IQs is due to variation in genes. In public discussion, however, the idea that genes account for most variation among IQs seems not only controversial but also associated with a few men of allegedly questionable character. To transform a scholarly consensus into something that appears the obsession of a disreputable fringe group requires more than accidental bias. The transformation, in fact, seems to involve three sets of people, each promoting something it values:

1. The national press favors "sociological" explanations of society, perhaps because when most editors and senior reporters went to school, optimism about the potentialities

for social reform was high. Insights from the growing science of human behavioral genetics have yet to reach the top offices of the media. Because the national press is sympathetic to social reforms that are threatened by intractable individual differences, arguments stressing the weight of genetic factors are not welcome, but arguments that minimize the significance of genetic factors are.

2. A few professors are available to provide the anti-genetic arguments. They rarely publish their arguments in the technical literature; when they do, the arguments usually fare poorly. They gather little or no data of their own, but instead tend toward ad hominem charges against the scholarly consensus, an example of which is the greatly overblown Burt story. Mostly, they are not psychologists; few of them have genuine psychometric expertise. The more extreme attacks on the heritability of IQ tend to be political, not scientific.

3. The professors just characterized could not so influence the national press without the tacit cooperation of many of the scholars who study, and the merchants who sell, tests. An unspoken agreement grants peace and prosperity, respectively, to scholars and publishers who stay out of the public debate. To explain the timidity of these people, we need look no further than the example of Jensen, who, after devoting himself to the study of educationally significant individual differences, is declared by the press to be an advocate of segregated schooling for "poor and black children." Rather than try to describe to a journalist the subtle but crucial distinctions between individual and group differences, these scholars describe their results in technical journals and allow merchants to sell their products quietly. When they are contacted by reporters following up on a story, they typically say something equivocally critical about IQ's heritability, so as to quarantine themselves from controversy and, above all, to protect themselves from false charges of racism and elitism. They usually do not even risk saying, as they truthfully could, that though groups may differ on the average, group differences are small relative to individual differences, and that every sociological stratum and ethnic group contains the full range of mental ability. A familiar example is the professor who assures a reporter that scientists cannot say "exactly" how large a role genes play in determining IQ, as if to criticize those who do assign a numerical weight to heritability. What the professor does not tell the reporter is that, although *exact* values are unknown, a range of possible values, given the data, is quite well established and almost uniformly accepted by experts.

Virtually all specialists on the heritability of IQ estimate a value somewhere in the range of 50 percent to 80 percent. Yet, in mid-1975, CBS produced a documentary, *The IQ Myth*, that in its narration and selective argumentation denied any evidence of a significant heritable component in IQ scores. The documentary presented snippets of testimony from professors in the second and third groups above, emphasizing the most extreme environmentalist

position. I wrote to CBS to protest, and quoted from the 1970 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to illustrate the true consensus of experts:

The usually accepted figures, based on the soundest and most extensive studies . . . employing verbal intelligence tests, assign 75% to 80% of the observed test variation in the general population to genetic factors and the rest to environmental physical and mental conditions and opportunities in home and society. Later work . . . using the Culture-Fair tests and improved statistical designs, gives a value of 78:22 to the heredity:environment variance ratio . . .

A CBS spokesman responded that his executive producer knew the *Britannica* quote and also knew the views of its author (R. B. Cattell, a highly respected psychometrician), but dismissed them as an unsupported "genetics-is-all theory," to use the spokesman's expression. I answered that Cattell neither believed nor wrote that genetics is all, and I sent two quotes from the 1974 *Britannica* (also in the 1980 edition), neither by Cattell. The first one below is from a behavior geneticist named W. R. Thompson; the second, from a psychometrician named H. J. Butcher:

Concerning the extent of genetic determination in human intelligence, most investigations have yielded heritability estimates between 70–80 percent. Since such values are relative to the population studied and to the method of estimation, some disagreement should be expected. It seems most unlikely, however, that genotype contributes less than 50 percent of the variability and it is conceivable that the figure is closer to 80 percent.

It has been demonstrated repeatedly that intelligence as assessed by the most highly regarded tests reflects substantial genetic influence. A common finding in European and North American research is that about 70–80 percent of human variation in measured intelligence is ascribable to genetic differences, only 20–30 percent to environmental factors.

I also sent the spokesman nineteen other quotes from standard textbooks, monographs, and widely cited empirical studies, to indicate the overwhelming consensus on IQ's substantial heritability. I told him that no comparable set of statements could be found to support the CBS position and concluded with the following paragraph:

My reading of the fairness doctrine suggests that CBS has failed to live up to its legal obligation to "scrupulously eschew intentional and deliberate falsification," to quote from a relevant FCC document. In its program on IQ, someone at CBS was as deliberate a liar as the topic permitted. You would be wise to chase him down, for he is serving well neither CBS nor the public.

The spokesman's response was to take offense at my intemperate paragraph and to close our correspondence. Three months later, *The IQ Myth* was aired a second time, without alteration.

Millions saw the CBS TV documentary, but an article by

Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr., and Matthew McGue, in *Science* magazine, in May of 1981, went unnoted by the national press, even though it was a unique contribution to the scientific literature on IQ's heritability. The brief article presented the world's data on IQ correlations between relatives—twins, siblings, half-siblings, cousins, parents and children, and adoptive relations. The data were gathered by dozens of scientists and reported in 111 studies representing more than 225,000 cases, which may be the largest sample ever assembled bearing on the heritability of a complex human trait, physical or psychological. To be included, a study had to meet standards of measurement and publication that, incidentally, excluded Burt's data. The pattern of correlation fell short of answering all the questions one may have about the inheritance of IQ, as Bouchard and McGue pointed out, but it unambiguously implicated genes. "The pattern of averaged correlations is remarkably consistent with polygenic theory," said the authors. As far as the public controversy over IQ is concerned, this article should have been big news. Instead, it has become simply one more entry in the technical literature.

Most people would have trouble conceiving of the enormity of the bias against testing in the national press. I am willing, indeed eager, to believe that so severe a bias is atypical; that most aspects of a story usually get told, because of the sheer anarchy of the national press, if for no other reason. But after more than a decade, and scores of contacts with the press, I can count on the fingers of one hand all the journalists I have met who are committed to telling the truth about my field as well as they can discover it. No one could organize censorship so effectively in America, so the distortions in the press must reflect countless more or less independent decisions by editors and reporters which lead to the perpetuation of a misleading and intellectually fallacious understanding of a serious scientific subject.

*In future, please
don't say "counsel of
despair" —
make it "counsel of
despair" —
Merrill*

FIVE YEARS AGO, A *NEW YORK TIMES* REVIEWER, praising a how-to book for raising IQ, called the claim that IQ cannot be raised a "counsel of despair." Although the book's claims are not taken seriously by professional psychologists, the reviewer probably named the major source of bias against testing. What seemed to him a counsel of despair threatens people's hopes and expectations for themselves, their children, and others they care about. People sense that the range of inequality in intelligence is awfully important; they may

even overestimate its importance. They do not want to hear that the range cannot be shrunk. Science paints in shades of gray, which laymen sharpen into black and white and then find depressing. The data say not that intelligence cannot be raised but that raising it much is hard, given existing methods of teaching and measurement. The data say that objectively measured intelligence contributes to, but does not fully determine, success in life's tasks. People are not much comforted to know that intelligence may be less important for happiness than for success.

Out of personal concerns emerge political beliefs. If people differ genetically in their capacities for school and work, then at least some of society's inequalities cannot be wiped out by merely equalizing opportunity. And if inequality persists in the face of equal opportunity, the argument against inequality loses at least one dimension of its moral force. Dedicated egalitarians rarely surrender their sense of moral rectitude quietly. Rather than face the resentment of aroused egalitarians (or perhaps because they share that egalitarian hopefulness), editors tend to neglect, and occasionally to denigrate, the findings and conclusions of psychometrics.

Egalitarians share the bias against testing with social scientists who do not like psychology. Some sociologists, economists, and political theorists share a strain of anti-psychologism based on the premise that, in the study of society, the important direction of causality is from group to individual, rather than vice versa. Individual psychological variables, such as IQ scores, are a mote in the eye of social theorists whose vision takes in the human landscape as a whole. Such people may be scholars of quality and character, but few of them know much about psychometrics or behavioral genetics. They often cannot evaluate the controversies they read about in the national press, and are not impelled by curiosity or a sense of scholarly necessity to find out enough to do so. They exert little pressure on the press to present the data on individual differences accurately.

Tests are being banned all over the country by courts and legislatures, something that would make sense if they were as vicious and ineffectual as the press says they are. But because IQ is, in fact, so broadly correlated with other cognitive activities, in school and at work, it is virtually impossible to design objective measures of performance not correlated with tested intelligence, and hence subject to the same charges of ineffectuality and bias. Competency testing in high school, civil-service examinations, job-placement examinations, college-entrance examinations, and diagnostic testing in school have, as a result, been restrained, banned, or revised so as to reduce test accuracy. The disclosures of answers to test items from the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) demanded by Ralph Nader and his associates, and passed into law in some states, will probably make the test more expensive and less reliable in predicting college performance. Both the increased cost and the loss in predictive validity will most hurt

the poor and disadvantaged, who will be paying more for a test that is less likely to spot unfulfilled native abilities. The more heritable a predictor is, the less it reflects the advantages or disadvantages of a student's environment, and no predictor of potential academic ability is as heritable as the scores on intelligence tests and their close correlates, the aptitude tests. Hence selection without these tests—which means reliance on grades, conduct, or family connections—is likely to be more biased than selection with them.

Many public school systems have stopped routine intelligence testing, which means that most children will lose the benefits of a proper use of their scores in individualizing instruction. These schools may be spared the risks of improper use, but schools cannot tailor programs of study to children throughout the range of ability if ability cannot be assessed. The restrictions on job-placement tests may be costing billions of dollars annually in lost productivity.

Judges and legislators, relying on the national press and on "experts" who speak more often for political constituencies than for science, assume that the political benefits of banning tests are cheaply won. If tests measure nothing important about individuals, as the press often says, then they are a needless barrier to achieving social and economic equality. But if, as the data say, they measure socially significant individual differences, the cost of banning them is paid mainly by those who might have benefited from better job placement and school curricula. Historically, testing arose out of the desire to break down arbitrary barriers of class, race, and nationality; it was part of the democratization of society at the turn of the century. Better than any other instrument available to teachers, then or now, tests would cut through the unpredictable circumstances of a child's cultural background to the relatively stable aptitudes on which education builds. The early testers believed that tests would open doors to disadvantaged people, not close them. And that, by and large, is what tests have done, enabling millions of people from poor or deprived backgrounds to develop their abilities better than the circumstances of birth would otherwise have allowed. As tests disappear, displaced by political requirements imposed on school and workplace, arbitrary barriers return; these barriers are new ones, perhaps, but no less unproductive and unjust.

Besides politicizing education and employment, the anti-testing bias inhibits the search for useful knowledge about human differences. Powerful pressures—even legal restraints—inhibit analyses showing how individual traits correlate with education and job training, with the conditions of learning and working, and with the quality of people's personal experience. Instead of learning more about how people function in a world whose intellectual demands are growing, America has all but outlawed the data, encouraged to do so by what it encounters in the national press. □

LOVE AND OTHER LESSONS

A SHORT STORY

BY JANET BEELER SHAW

OF THE FOUR PAY PHONES IN HIGHWOOD THAT Lina Jean could use, the one she liked least was the booth in front of the truck stop on Route 285. Even when she closed the glass doors tight, the mountain wind and the heave of passing trucks shook the walls and drowned out full sentences. Once a Coors truckdriver veered close, as if he might hit the booth. He grinned down at her when she flinched. Then he puckered her a kiss and winked—he must have guessed that she was calling a man. Anyone who saw the way she pressed the receiver to her ear, pushed her forehead against the chrome, and hunched her shoulders to block the invasion of traffic noises could have guessed that.

There wasn't much more privacy at the wall phone in the vestibule of the Mountain Inn Café, but here Lina Jean didn't have to worry about the trucks. "No rooms in the Inn!" Alberta Pollack, who ran the café, liked to say as she made change. "Nothing here but the best fried chicken in Colorado!" Lina Jean wasn't bothered by the people who passed her, but Alberta stared and stared, even when she was ringing up a check and repeating her dried-up old joke. So of course Alberta knew too. How could Lina Jean mask the flush of disappointment at the base of her throat when he wasn't there to answer her call? She had no disguises. And if Alberta knew, the whole town must know.

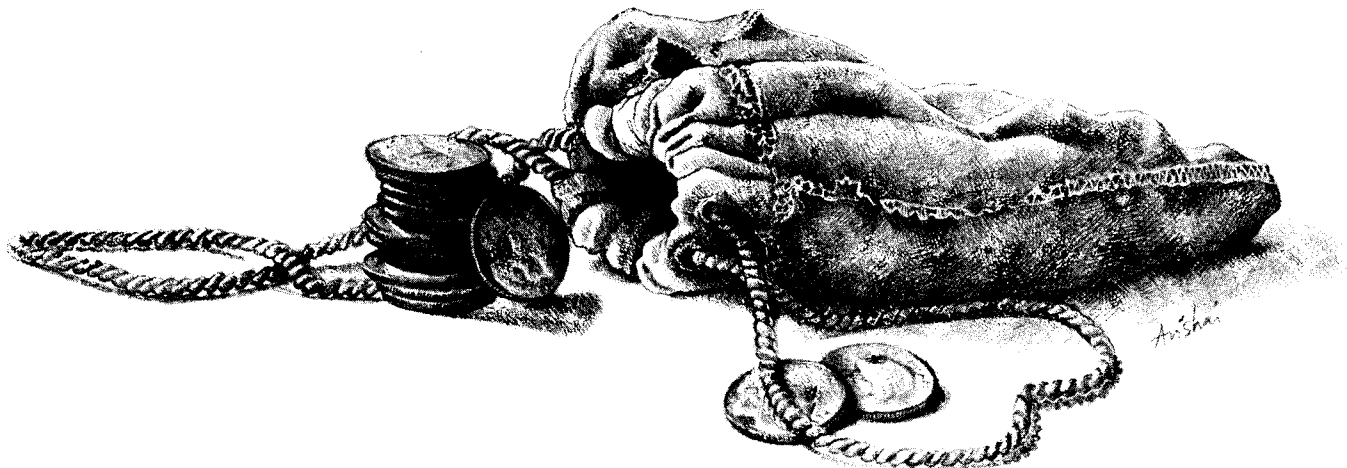
The pay phone in the New Day Coin Laundry was better. The New Day was really just a basement with a few

washers and dryers. The phone was at the rear, and no one bothered to glance back into the moldy gloom when Lina Jean's voice trembled over the swish of the washers, or when she laughed her nervous laugh. Sometimes she brought Jamie's diapers and did a few loads of wash while she made her call to David. Rita, as Lina Jean's mother liked to be called instead of Mom, didn't mind watching the baby if Lina Jean was doing something constructive like the laundry. In fact, Rita usually sent some of her uniforms along for Lina Jean to look after—gentle cycle, delicate dry, and onto hangers as quick as they dried. Rita had to have her uniforms just so because she worked with the public, she said. She ran a beauty parlor in a small trailer down the street from the larger trailer in which she and Lina Jean and the baby lived.

The best phone booth was in Blossom's Dry Goods and Drugstore, around the corner from the Pioneer Village Reconstruction. It stood inside the rear door, an old-fashioned booth with four heavy wooden walls and a shelf under the phone on which Lina Jean could stack up her quarters, or lay her shoulder bag and spiral notebook. Before she made her call, she'd buy a Coke from the machine and go over the notes she'd jotted in the blue notebook that was her journal. David had told her to keep a journal so she could chart her spiritual progress. Her spiritual development was as important to him as his own, he told her once. That was his work. He was a priest.

Sometimes she read him the notes she had made in her journal, but usually she just read him lines she had copied from the book he had given her. She didn't want to take the

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chance of Alberta Pollack, or anyone else, overhearing anything too personal. She was having a hard time getting through the book, so she read the lines that he himself had once underlined. He underlined everything he read, he told her—yellow for agreement, blue for possible sermon material. In the margin he had made black check marks beside points he found especially moving or insightful. These marks had been made long before he knew her, but she thought of them as secret notes to her. She worked at the yellowed pages as though there were a message there for her in a complicated code that she must learn to break. Sometimes she wished he hadn't given her the book, it was so difficult. But that day when she talked to him the first time she was glad of the gift. Imagine just reaching into a bookcase, picking out a book, and giving it to an almost total stranger! It seemed a promise.

IT WAS A HOT SUNDAY MORNING IN LATE AUGUST WHEN she met David. She was walking Jamie in his stroller, wandering idly through town, feeling bored and lonely and disgusted with her looks, for a cold sore had formed in the corner of her mouth. Big orange butterflies shivered over the weeds, and the sun was white in the pale sky. She didn't pay attention to the clapboard Catholic church, which looked more like a bungalow than a real church, until people walked out, shading their eyes with sheets of mimeographed paper that must be the programs. Practically no Catholics lived in Highwood. The only Catholic Lina Jean knew was Carmen Garcia, whose father herded sheep on the government land. In high school, Carmen had worn a thin gold chain with a delicate cross dangling at the base of her throat. Lina Jean had wanted such a chain and cross. She had been plumper then, her face even more round, and her pale, fine hair dragging on her shoulders, no matter how carefully Rita waved it when it was washed. Lina Jean hoped that with a gold chain and cross she would become slim, dark, mysterious, as intensely silent as Carmen Garcia, and capable of passion. Rita gave Lina Jean a silver chain with a peace symbol on it. It wasn't the same at all.

Most of the people who went to the Catholic service were tourists—campers in the summer, skiers in the winter—or a few old people whose names Lina Jean didn't know. But there was also Alberta Pollack, who wore an oval blue Mary medal on her watch and taped an Advent calendar on her cash register when she put up Christmas decorations at the Mountain Inn Café. Even as Lina Jean watched through the privet hedge that separated the church from the house next to it, she saw fat, untidy Alberta come blinking out into the sun, pushing up the gray straggles at the back of her neck, and pause to speak to the young priest who stood in the shallow band of shade by the door.

Jamie whimpered and Lina Jean pushed his cuddling blanket against his cheek and rocked the stroller. She stud-

ied the priest. His curly hair was reddish brown, his short beard darker. The skin on his cheeks and forehead was pale except for a strip of sunburn down his narrow nose. A city fellow, then. A tasseled rope held his white robe close around his slim waist, and she saw beneath the skirt the hems of black trousers and black shoes. He glanced at the people climbing into their vans and pickups; his eyes were a clear, primary blue, like poster paint.

When Alberta was out of sight, Lina Jean maneuvered Jamie's stroller across the yellowed grass toward the church. A buzz like droning bees hummed in her head. Walking toward the handsome priest was like climbing a steep trail above the timber line: she ran out of breath and had to push herself forward.

The stroller wheels bumped the porch and Jamie let out a squeal from the jolt. The priest looked down at her and smiled. "You wouldn't park a car like that, would you?"

"I drive a school bus," she blurted. "Burton Township. K through eight."

He stepped to the edge of the porch, shielding her eyes from the glare. "Hard work in this mountain country."

She nodded. It *was* hard work. Rita didn't understand, because Lina Jean had her hours off in the middle of the day. But often she had trouble sleeping, her shoulders ached so, and always her head hurt from concentrating on the bad roads, from the screaming kids, from worrying about being on time. "Damn hard." She was grateful that he understood. And then she blushed. You don't talk to a priest like he's one of Rita's cowboy boyfriends, she warned herself.

But he didn't seem to mind. "Were you looking for someone?" He was still smiling, his teeth as white, even, and clean as the collar he wore.

"You," she said, terrified at her boldness.

He scratched his beard. "Do I know you?"

She shook her head.

"Well, let's get that child out of the sun. I'll slip off this hot cassock and we'll get acquainted." As he spoke, he stepped down to her and lifted the stroller with Jamie still in it up onto the porch. Then he leaned down and winked at the little boy. "Your mom thinks she's driving her bus when she pushes you. Look out." He winked at Lina Jean, too, and a sharp pain twisted just below her heart. Lord, even when they don't mean to, men make it hard on you!

She followed the priest up the center aisle of the dim church. A smear of light entered through the milky panes, and she breathed dust and a sweet scent like the strawberry incense she burned when she smoked dope and didn't want Rita to know.

"There's an office back there. Open the window. I'll be with you in a minute."

She pushed at the wooden window frame in the small, book-lined office, her hands shaking. What would happen now? She had the sensation of hurtling down an icy road, the bus rocking, out of control. To make the room stop spinning, she closed her eyes.

He was already talking as he came in behind her, something about his drive up from Denver, his car engine, the truck traffic. She didn't get the story, but he seemed to think she would know what he meant. Her hands pushed into the pockets of her denim skirt, and she turned and leaned against the desk to keep her balance. Now he didn't look like a priest at all. He wore a blue-and-white-striped V-neck shirt. A narrow gold chain with an oval gold medal nested in his brown chest hair. Faintly freckled, his arms were white as winter skin. She wanted to touch the raised blue veins inside his wrists.

He motioned for her to sit down on the metal folding chair, and he took the canvas chair by the desk. He smiled again. "So?"

Another blush heated her chest and the buzz became louder.

"Don't be shy," he said gently. "You're here. You came for a reason."

She looked down at her bare feet in her plastic thongs. She handed Jamie a teething biscuit.

Then he was holding his hand out to her. "Maybe we should introduce ourselves. I'm Father David Alexander. You could call me David. That seems more natural to me, though the older priests always want to be called Father."

His hand was hot but dry, his grip firm. She was glad she had wiped her own hand on her skirt after she gave Jamie the cookie. "Lina Jean Byrne," she managed. "Lina Jean's my grandma's name."

To her relief, David talked for a while about the church in Highwood, explaining to her that it was a mission, really. He would come up every other week, and when winter rolled around another priest from Denver, one with a jeep, would have the responsibility. He liked Highwood, he said—clean air, the green upland meadows, the mountain peaks all around. "Do you like living here?" he asked her.

She had never asked herself that question. But now her mouth wasn't so dry, and she could answer. "It's home. That's about all you can say for it."

"Tell me about yourself, Lina Jean." His fingertips touched the back of her hand, urging her on.

"He's not legit." She gave Jamie's stroller a tug. The room was spinning again. She had said the very last thing she wanted to say.

He nodded. Maybe he didn't understand her.

"I'm not married. Never was." She wanted to run now, but her legs were shaking.

"Ah!" David squeezed Jamie's plump arm.

She rushed on with her story. "Raymond Silva was my boyfriend, I guess you'd call him. He drove through here every week with a big truckload of logs. After we got to talking that first time at the Burger Chef where I was working, he'd look me up whenever he came into town. So I went out with him. Then in a few months it turned out I was pregnant, and when I told him he drove off toward Buena Vista, and that's the last I saw of him. Now it's me and Mom and Jamie."

"A love child," David said.

In order to clarify *that* right away, she said, "I love Jamie all right, but I can't say I loved Raymond Silva. He was a good time."

David shook his head, his lips set tight, his voice firm. "I mean, you *had* the baby. That's so rare, now. You thought about the baby as well as yourself and now here's this handsome son. That's *love*." He drew the word out like something cool and delicious and soothing on his tongue.

She hadn't thought of it that way, but she liked his version better than the truth. The truth was she had denied she *could* be pregnant until it was too late. Her fears had paralyzed her—she hadn't even had a boyfriend before; she had finally got a job; she was only eighteen; Rita would kill her! And with a kid, who would ever, ever marry her? Raymond Silva certainly wouldn't marry her. He was already married. He had a snapshot of his wife and little girl thumbtacked up next to the mattress in the sleeper behind his truck cab. She hadn't seen it the first few times, and by the time she did, it had seemed childish to complain.

"Love?" she repeated after him, as though he were teaching her a new word. "It's nothing special to love your own baby."

He leaned toward her, his face tense with energy. "Oh, but it is, Lina Jean. Love is always special. It's special because God gives us the power to love. 'God is love.' You've heard that, haven't you?"

"I went to the Baptist Sunday school a few times."

"Little children learn that lesson, but sometimes we have to learn that lesson all over again as adults. You've got a head start. If you have the power to love, you're a fortunate woman, Lina Jean. Love isn't something you can use up on just one other person, even someone as dear as your child. God gave you the power to love so you can love others, and so you can love him."

She leaned back, trembling.

He glanced at his watch and frowned, a sharp line jagging down between his eyebrows. He was older than she had thought at first, maybe thirty, maybe even older than thirty.

"Listen," he said hurriedly. "I've got to drive down to Antero Junction for a funeral. I'm the chief circuit rider today. But I want to give you a book about a man who learned to love God. It's a story you'll like. Read it and tell me what you think, will you?" He swung around and pulled a paperback off the bookshelves behind him. Handing it to her, he explained, "I moved some of my old books in here. Don't worry about losing it. Just enjoy it."

The book lay in her lap as light as a piece of white bread.

"And tell me what you think of it?" he insisted.

She mouthed Yes.

"I have to go now, but stop by again two Sundays from today. Or better yet, call me." He scribbled numbers on a piece of paper. When he slipped the paper into the book, she thought the back of his hand brushed her thigh.

"Call you?"

"Why not? The housekeeper at the rectory will answer. Ask for Father David and tell me how you're coming with the book. I think you came here today for a reason, and we should stay in touch."

"Can you call a priest just to talk?"

"If I say so." He smiled, ushering her ahead of him back through the church.

BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T WANT RITA TO HEAR, LINA JEAN saved her quarters for pay phones. She kept them in a purple flannel Seagram's bag from a gift bottle of whiskey Raymond Silva had given her. At night she held the bag with its comfortable weight of quarters in her lap while she tried to read the book. But how could she concentrate? If she so much as remembered David's low, dark voice speaking her name, her face burned, and painful threads of fire ran down her arms and into her palms. If she thought of his face when he had looked at her, saying "love," her breath was as hard to catch as though she'd been hit in the chest. When she whispered his name, cupping her hand over her mouth so Rita wouldn't hear—"David!"—she thought she would faint. He hadn't judged her for the mistake she'd made with Raymond Silva. She was clean and new and in love. Oh, she had it bad! She was a goner, and unlucky, too—first a married man, and now a Catholic priest, who could never marry her either.

The first time, she called him from the phone booth at the truck stop while she got her bus tires checked. When she heard the husky voice she had imagined so often she started, scattering her carefully piled quarters onto the tin floor of the booth. But he made it easy for her, as he had before. "What did you do today?" he asked her. Even though she was shaking she could answer that one. No one had ever asked her about herself before. Certainly not Raymond Silva, who seemed to assume that she didn't exist when he wasn't with her.

Whenever she called David, he had her begin with her day. She told him about the weather, the road conditions, a cold she was fighting off, an elk she had startled out of a creek bottom, the aspens with their gold-dollar leaves, Jamie's first words. Talking to David made her life real. Then she would say, "And I've been thinking about what you said about love." He'd take it from there. He'd quote Bible passages, his voice like silk on the solemn words. He spoke about the hand of God in the lives of men. He talked about God's love penetrating the arena of human history. As she listened, she hung on to the phone as though she were dangling off the bridge over the Royal Gorge and only David could save her life.

On every other Sunday, Lina Jean left Jamie with Rita, who didn't trust Catholics but was glad Lina Jean was getting some values pounded into her head. She went to mass, and afterward she met David for the half hour he could spare before he drove on to the next church. While she read from her journal, he ate the sandwich he had brought

for his lunch, taking big, determined bites and gulping iced tea from his thermos. Then he'd talk, his short hands with blunt fingers cutting the air as he made his points about love. She imagined his hands on her throat, then unbuttoning her blouse, coming to rest on her breasts. In the cracked windowpane behind him the autumn sun sizzled like lightning.

David smiled, but he almost never laughed. She wished sometimes she could bring them some beers and slow things up so they'd have time to relax and laugh a little. He never made jokes like Raymond Silva had. You could give it to Raymond Silva for that—he knew how to make a woman laugh, him and his cheerful dirty stories. David was the deadly serious type, but maybe that's how priests should be—intense and focused on their work.

Once she asked him, "You're always asking about my daily life. What's your life like?"

"I try not to think about it," he said quickly, and she didn't ask again.

Another time she said, "You aren't at all what I thought a priest would be."

"You've hit it on the head," he told her.

When he didn't say any more, she urged, "I mean, you pay such close attention. And why do you pay attention to me? I'm not even a Catholic." Of course she had hoped he would say, I love you, Lina Jean.

He had finished his lunch and was fitting the lid back on the plastic sandwich box. He didn't look up. "You want to learn what I've got to teach." Then he changed the subject. "Saint Benedict was a genius, you know that? Way back in the sixth century he knew more about what makes a man tick than any of the bishops do today."

"What's that mean?"

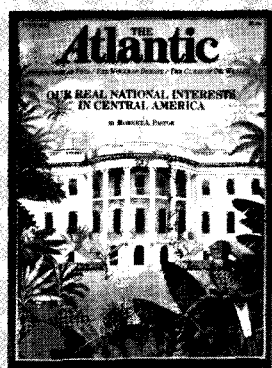
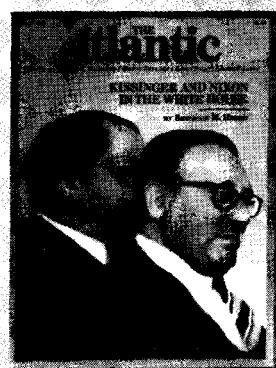
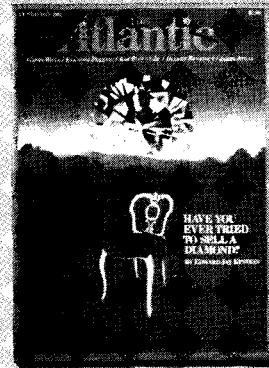
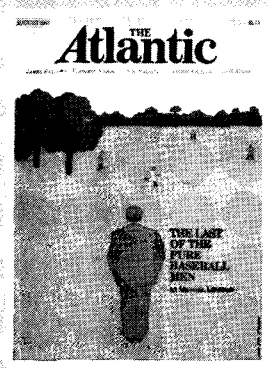
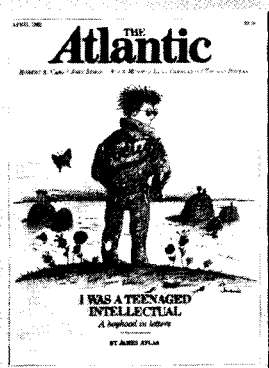
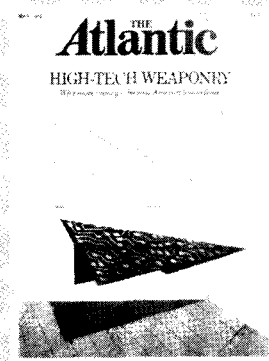
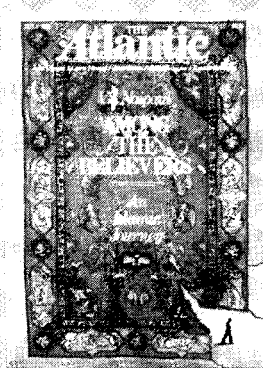
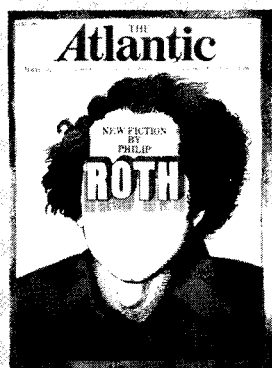
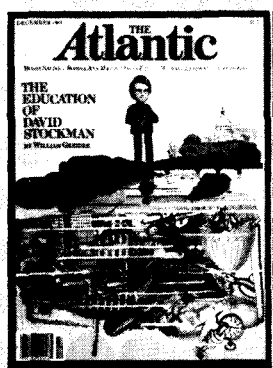
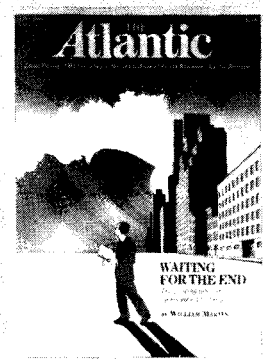
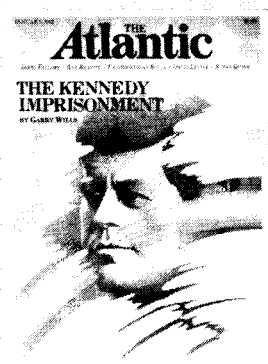
"The Benedictine brothers lived in a community. They had to obey the rules of their community, and if one of them broke the rules, he was sent away. That makes sense, doesn't it?"

She nodded.

"The brother had to go and live on the hillside and ponder his mistake. He might decide to repent and come back, he might decide to leave for good. Fair enough. But now here's where Benedict's genius came in. He said that another brother must go and stay with the exile until the exile had made his decision. The exile must not be abandoned. He *must* have the comfort of human love." He glanced up at her, his eyes as blue as the eastern sky at sunset. "That's another aspect of love, Lina Jean. To stand between a man and the void in his self. Do you understand me?"

She nodded again, because she knew he wanted her to. But to tell the truth, she didn't understand. His face was both pale and angry as he spoke, and she thought of an electric fence: if she touched him a current would crack through her body and she would be frayed and burned, by what power she didn't know, but not by love—of that much she was sure.

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"You're coming back here, aren't you?" Why had she asked him that?

"Sure." The furrow deepened between his eyes. "I pull in here right on time, don't I? Just like you in your school bus. The bishop thinks all his priests are like buses. We don't have feelings or needs. But there are some of us who don't see it that way."

A tremor that reminded her of her baby's first stirrings inside her womb made her voice shrivel. "What do you mean?"

"God knows." He shoved his mouth into a lopsided smile. "I don't." Then he asked about her journal, so she couldn't tell him that she was scared and didn't even know if she was frightened for herself or for him. But after all, nothing changed—she called him twice a week for a few minutes and saw him every other Sunday, and sooner than she would have guessed she finished his book. When she returned it, he didn't offer her another. Later, she thought that had been a sign.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN DECEMBER WAS SCHEDULED to be David's last mass in Highwood until spring. She waited in the office for him with the Christmas gift she had bought him tucked in her shoulder bag. It was an expandable watchband with real Zuni turquoise decoration. It had cost too much, but she wanted to give him something wonderful, something no one had given him before.

When he came into the office, he was pulling on a heavy gray sweater. His hair was tousled and he was frowning. "Don't they have heat here? We could pull up some pews and burn them, I guess. Aren't you cold?"

"I kept my coat on."

At the window, he looked out into the powdery snow being lifted by the wind like spray from water.

She had her speech rehearsed. "Listen, David? I was wondering. I mean, you're not going to be up here again for a long time. Can I keep calling you? I want to. I could even take the Greyhound down into Denver some Sunday . . ." Her voice ran down, like one of Jamie's wind-up toys whining to a halt. She had asked for too much.

His back still to her, he said quietly, "I won't be there." "What?"

He swung around, blinking from the fierce light off the snow, and flung himself into the canvas chair. "I'm leaving."

"Leaving? Going where?" Through the stirrings of panic she hurriedly tried to calculate how much it would cost to call him in California, say, or New York.

"Just leaving. I'm not sure yet where we'll end up. Where we can get jobs, I guess."

"We? A bunch of you?"

He slid his hands deep into the pockets of his black trousers. "No, just me and Ann. We're going to be married."

She heard herself repeat, "Ann?" The name was as

meaningless as a nonsense word from a nursery rhyme.

"Ann Eveland. She was a nun, Sacred Heart. We love each other. It seems there's no room for human love inside the Church. Just the love of God. For some that's not enough."

A wave of pure pain battered her heart. "Ann," she repeated, although her voice wasn't her own; it came out shrill and thin.

"You'd like Ann, Lina Jean. She's very kind and warm—"

"Ann!" So all that time he had talked so passionately of love he was really talking about this Ann! He wasn't thinking about God. He wasn't thinking about her, Lina Jean Byrne. He'd been justifying himself, thinking of reasons why he should leave to be with that nun.

"Don't—"

"David!" she cried in that queer, high voice.

She heard, more than felt, her knees hit the bare wood floor, and suddenly she was kneeling in front of him, reaching for his legs. With both hands he made a quick gesture for her to stand, but she couldn't.

He was on his feet, looking past her toward the door. Behind her in the open doorway stood Alberta Pollack, carrying one of her homemade Christmas wreaths.

"Just a moment," David said to Alberta.

Then, as though Lina Jean had knelt before him for his blessing, he whispered to her, "Go in peace," and his hot thumb traced the sign of the cross on her forehead.

Lina Jean pulled up the hood of her parka, grabbed her shoulder bag, and pushed past Alberta, who blocked the door with her spray of ribboned pine. Just get out, get out of there before she cried. As the side door creaked open and she ran out into the blowing snow, she heard David call, "Will you wait?" But what was there left to say?

Still, with the unreasonable hope that he might come back, she went to mass two Sundays later. A heavy-set, white-headed priest in after-ski boots was there in David's place. In his talk the priest compared life to the Rose Bowl game and Jesus to a winning quarterback. After that she didn't go back to the church. But of course she had to go on making phone calls at regular intervals. If she stopped making the calls, everyone in town would know she didn't have a man anymore. Once a week she forced herself to use a phone where she knew she'd be seen. The Mountain Inn Café was the best place for this, and now that Alberta thought that Lina Jean was a convert, she smiled instead of staring. Often Lina Jean just dialed the weather service and listened to the tape several times through. If she knew that Rita was at the beauty parlor, she dialed their home phone and let it ring and ring and ring. Once she called United Dial-a-Prayer in Denver, her hand shaking with memory as she thrust in her money. As soon as she dialed she knew she had made a mistake, but before she could hang up she heard what she was almost sure was David's recorded voice say, as huskily as a lover's, "In this cold season, let our love—" □

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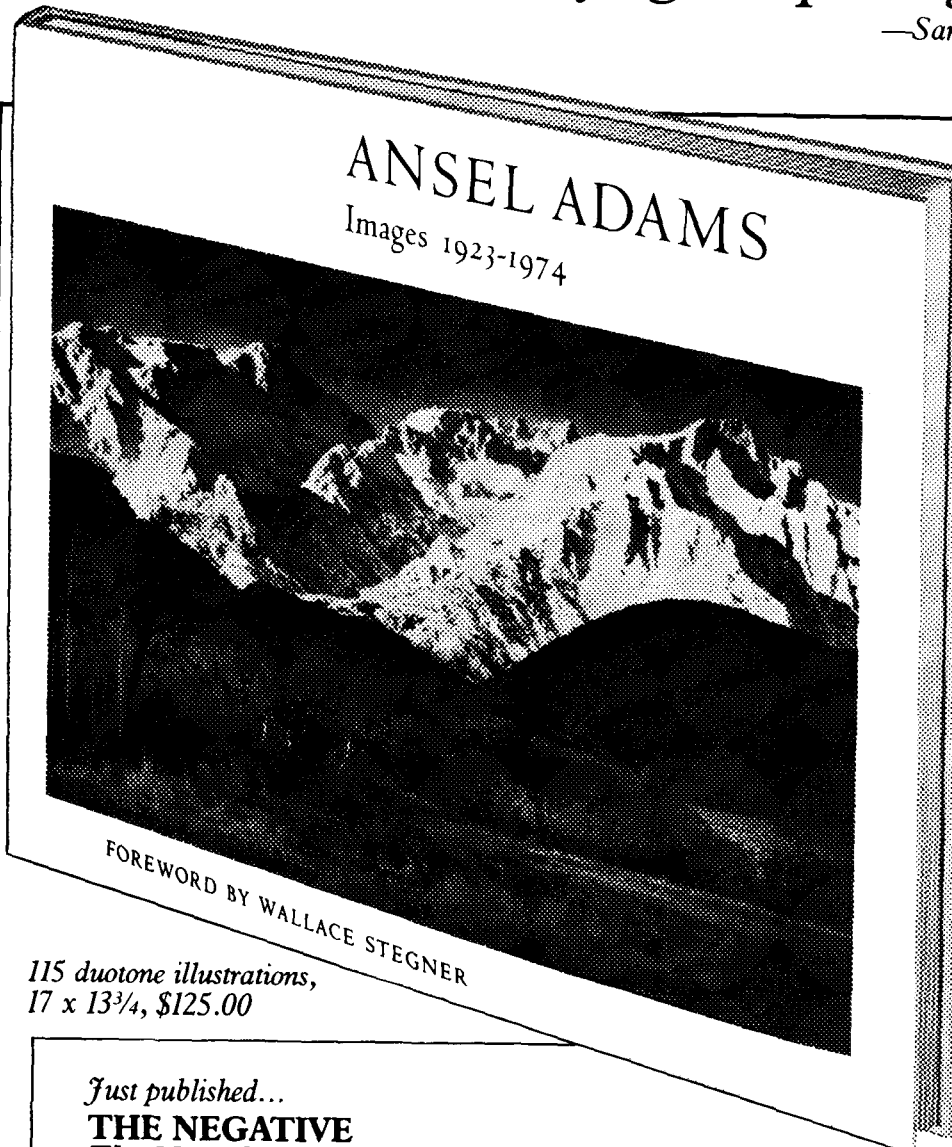
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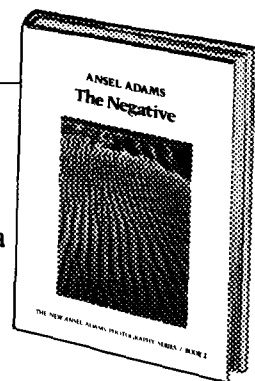
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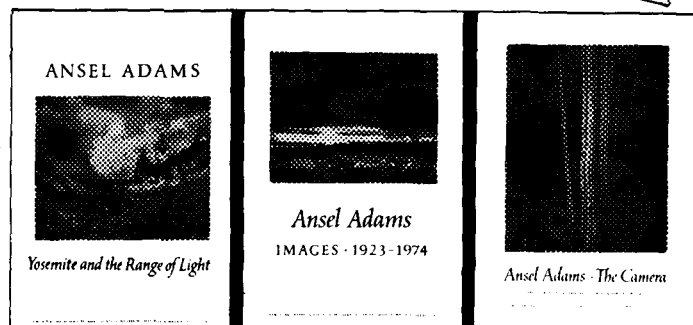
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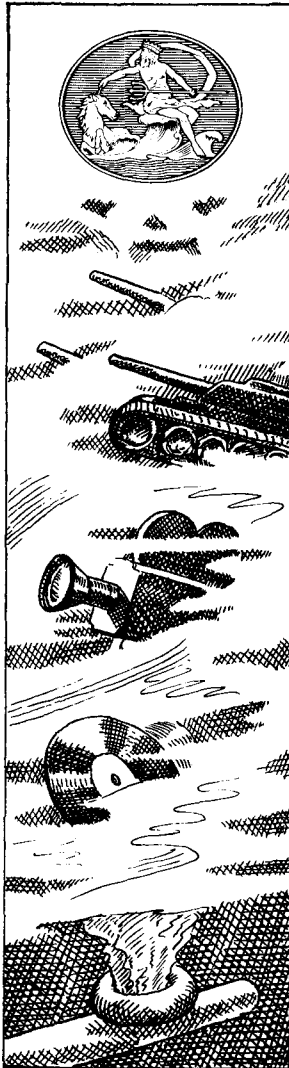
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RENDEZVOUS WITH ROMANIA

BY LYNN CARAGANIS

(with apologies to Graham Greene)



IT IS THE EARLY days of this century, the parlour of an English country house. A young man wants to be a writer. Why? Why not remain well-to-do and "safe," like so many men of his generation? Of course, he knows that death is the desirable end, the end to "all this." Then why authorship, that futile packing and unpacking of the smuggled guns of memory? I cannot answer now, a quarter of a century later, any more than I could then, in the early days of this century. Yet I had to write. It was as necessary to me as the smile of a beautiful woman you have come to love. This is the story of that young man, the books he was to write, and a certain journey he was to take, just before the outbreak of war.

I do not see much promise in those early novels—each one of which came out of the author as a baby comes out of his mother's womb. *Papers in Order and Bags Packed* was a total failure, as I knew it would be from the time I was seven years old. But Ronald Peetie—he was later to shoot himself—had been urging me to publish for some time. Over too many gins one night in Brazil, I agreed. He was a young man, this writer, and bewildered, perhaps, by the rats that were running all over his feet, squealing revolution. He did not know what I now know—though age brings its own innocence—that rats have no attention span and frequently don't know what they are saying, and that "political" revolution means nothing: for a man must first hunt himself like a beast, and catch himself, and beat himself up.

That first novel was a nightmare of technical worries,¹ as I struggled with nausea and mosquitos on a tiny boat, while a surly Estonian "boat boy" offered me sex and drugs for money. It was then that I smelled for the first time a sweet, heavy odor I was to recognise repeatedly in later years—in Quemoy and Matsui, in Kenya during the Mau Mau rebellion, in Paris at the first performance of

The Rite of Spring. It was the odor of outraged innocence, the sweet, heavy smell of corruption.

In later years, I have dared re-read that novel only two or three dozen times. There is nothing of value in it really, except possibly the character of old Smith, the Jesuit armaments dealer with his cherished seventeenth-century mouse in the bottle he would not put down, even when his wife fell off that Liberian steam packet and drowned while he watched, sinking under the load of pity that was never to desert him. Or, perhaps, the character of Dottie, the nun-faced prostitute, who demanded to be paid in chocolates, and whose past was a mystery even to her creator. But I was to have some consolation later on, when an American President, Harry Truman (the former haberdasher), was to say that reading it made him understand political life for the first time.

Yet there must have been something to those early novels, because in 1932, I was approached by a secret agent disguised as a beggarman, as I was strolling near my home.

"I hear you're a young novelist looking for trouble," he began.

I walked on and made no sign of having heard, carrying caution in my hands like a bag of explosives.

"Care for a fag? Or prefer opium?" he continued, sizing me up.

"Whatever you say."

"Interested in spying for us?" He drew out an expensive cigarette case. "Help yourself."

"Not till I know where I'm going and if there's any trouble there."

"Okay, okay."

We walked a short way in silence, the young novelist and the beggarman. He was not what he seemed. Was I?

"How's Bucharest sound?"

I made up my mind quickly. "Count me in."

We discussed the situation over akvavit in the nearby cosy. Apparently, the Romanians were engaged in a mobilization that looked very ugly indeed.

¹How, I wondered, could I tell a story without letting the reader's attention wander from myself?

("Ugly"—why did I ever popularize that word?) I was to visit Bucharest incognito—a shepherdess costume was provided—and just circulate, trying to overhear war secrets and, if possible, steal money. Other than that, I was free to do as I pleased. I had my rendezvous with Romania.

It meant saying good-bye to my wife, Niçoise, and to my children. I had a rendezvous with Romania. Naturally, I didn't like leaving them—I had to take all the money with me—but they had plenty of live goats. I boarded the Romanian train that night at Victoria Station, knowing I would never return.

As we thundered across the Channel, I read Cardinal Newman's "Apologia Christi," or "Apology for Christ." Was it there, in that clattering pre-war compartment with its naive photos of the Midlands, that the spy thriller was born? I think not. And yet . . .

I was not the only passenger reading Newman that night. The respectable man opposite was reading it too. Was he a shade too respectable? I covered my face with both hands and peered out through them, in perfect security. Then, by squeezing my eyes almost shut, I was able to read his tiny lapel pin: KGB. I shuddered, like the young boy who smokes too many opium pipes to impress the hot, sticky girls in the "plaza." I fell asleep and dreamed: a large cathedral, organ music. Monks intone Latin. I feel an almost unbearable tenderness. Then, in the corner, I see the *Pietà*, surrounded by a sort of halo. Mary's eyes turned down in compassion on—me!

I woke up. The KGB agent was sitting at my side.

"Believe me," he whispered, in heavily accented English, "I have read all your books, and I *love* them. And I *love you*!"

Nothing more was said. Slowly, I drew out my wallet.

"No! No!" cried the Soviet. "Never, from the author of *The Dried-Up Policeman*!" Strangely enough, I was to see him again when I walked across Asia, many years later. He seemed to admire me as much as ever, but had fallen pathetically under the spell of Somerset Maugham.

Dieppe was gay in those days before Occupation—but it was the gaiety of the fan dancer who has just begun to notice big veins coming out on her legs. One

night, I was sitting up late in my hotel, drinking with a Polish novelist and talking with caution. There was a knock. We froze. My companion shouted something in Polish. A small dwarf entered, bearing a telegramme for me from De Gaulle. How did he know I was here?

FORGET BUCHAREST STOP JOIN THE
RESISTANCE FRANCAISE STOP DONT
TELL ANYBODY STOP FIRST GET YOUR
SELF SOME NEW CLOTHES STOP
DE GAULLE

I threw it down and smoked some opium. Over the open flame, the soft bubble of brown wax slowly changed its shape until it formed a perfect question mark. Is there a God who makes our plans for



us, and shapes our lives? Or a sneering clown?

The Polish novelist explained the political situation. The Estonians, most of whom had never seen a white man, were massing on the border, along with twenty-five angry divisions from the Far East. Of course, I had heard something of the same thing from Sir Buddy Johnson. In short, all that I had loved in France—its irreplaceable civilisation, as forgiving and grateful as a fading society beauty, its thriving brothels where, for a bag of Hershey's Kisses, slender girls will "make you feel at home"—all this was threatened now. The Polish novelist begged me to stay. "You know codes," he said. Could I turn my back on "La belle France"? I had to. I had a rendezvous.

Bucharest. Toddlers in gutters, gnawing with empty eyes on the Top Secret

despatches of a government they did not know had fallen. This was the garbage of war. Bucharest—Troy. Bucharest—Espionage. Bucharest—Fear. These are inextricably linked in my mind now, two quarters of a century later, just as they were then, when, still a young man, I was feeling my way to a difficult destiny.

I saw Vslivky and Mrovichki. I saw Blücher—already old and dying of herpes simplex. Nothing was said. Already my true feelings were beginning to emerge. I felt sympathy for the Romanians. But I felt sympathy for the Estonians, too. But most of all, I felt sorry for Blücher. He was old, and the Romanians didn't need him. His kind of war was just a memory now—made obsolete by his own incredible victories at Wagram and Waterloo. On my last day in Bucharest, riding by in Lady Blumberg's Daimler, I saw Blücher—still harboring that grudge against the Corsican Devil—sitting miserably alone at a tiny table at the Metropole, while shopgirls walked by in their summer dresses, laughing heartlessly. He was reading that "literary lady" Madame de Staël (a woman of the mannish type I cannot bear). Years later, as I was lunching in Malaya, a furtive red-haired man rushed in to tell me of Blücher's death. He then keeled over, a knife in his back.

Spy in My Arms, the novel I wrote on my return, was not a success with the public. However, it was the inspiration for the following poem, which T. S. Eliot sent me:

A Spy in my Arms!
A Spy in my Arms!
Whoops! I
think you're swell.

I alone am responsible for the failure of the book, as it has very little of merit in it—except, perhaps, my description of the Duchess of Riga's bitter laugh as she ascended the Grand Staircase of Bucharest. For the president of Romania had just thrown her over, in favor of a Chinese taxi girl. Through some misfortune, Averell Harriman had been present during the entire interview. Perhaps that had some bearing on her later suicide.

In any case, who was I? A no one. A young and restless novelist, standing on the sidelines of history, spreading despair, and where that was not possible, looking up brothels or hopelessly buying akvavits for spies who were paid to betray me.

Lynn Caraganis lives in New York and is writing a novel.

THIS HAS BEEN the story of a certain part of a life. The books I wrote, a certain journey I took. I have received much praise, and much blame. I make no apologies. I will say, simply, that the heroes of my books are men with a rendezvous, struggling to meet it, but prevented by the malicious operations of Fate on the innocent, and by the repulsiveness of foreigners. In spite of these things, Fate compels them to travel—always looking for trouble yet never averting their eyes from the grinning death's-head within. They are men who know how to get their hands on the last can of beer in a falling capital; men who can get a band of savage Gurkhas to smile tenderly and hand over their Spam. They are men who have known, almost since before they were born, that there is no limit to human folly—at the mere mention of which, waves of compassionate pity overtake their weary hearts. □

MUSIC

TWO ROCK REVIVALS

BY LANGDON WINNER



ROCK-AND-ROLL has become so thoroughly sophisticated, so calculating, that to hear the music done with simple enthusiasm comes as a shock. Techniques of performance and production have been refined to a point where most singing sounds slick or contrived. In a mocking response to this condition, New Wave rockers now affect a cool, detached, disembodied voice. To show passion unfiltered by layers of irony or contempt is considered almost foolish.

Under the circumstances, it is surprising that anyone would have the nerve to resurrect the rock-and-roll of some twenty years ago, music that delivers its feelings in a direct, unpretentious way. Two ambitious attempts of that kind have appeared in albums released this year. One of them is a series of five records on the Ambient Sound label, a showcase of forgotten vocal groups of

the 1950s and early 1960s. The other is the debut of The Blasters, a band whose startling innovation is to do old-fashioned rockabilly with flair and integrity. Not at all the dreary "oldies" send-ups of Sha Na Na and other screwballs, these are ingenious revivals showing how rock can grow old gracefully as a set of living traditions.

The Ambient Sound albums were the idea of Marty Pekar, a young New York advertising copywriter. Pekar set out to find rock groups who had scored hits twenty years ago and then faded from sight. He looked for singers whose voices had held up, who still cared about their music, who hadn't fallen victim to drugs, poverty, or show-biz bitterness. Eventually, he located five still active, still healthy "doo-wop" ensembles—The Harptones, The Capris, The Mystics, The Jive Five, and Randy and the Rainbows—and, with the backing of CBS Records, gave each a chance to record.

The recipe followed in these sessions is sensible. Rather than ask the groups to do remakes of their old tunes, a policy that has generated dozens of horrible rock restorations, Pekar insisted that each outfit prepare a set of new material. Songs could be original or taken from rockers of a more recent vintage. All of the numbers, however, were to be done in ways that captured the spirit of the group's classic style. Instrumental backing was provided by a capable yet unobtrusive studio band that Pekar had assembled in a recording studio in Queens. As he describes the format on the record jackets, "There are no rehearsals between the recording group and the musicians until the time of the session. After a few run-throughs, the vocalists are evicted from the studio to take their places at microphones set up in the studio storage room. This large room is not soundproofed in any way, but it has great natural acoustics. A giant speaker is set up in the storage room so that the group can hear the band without headphones."

These preparations were supposed to create, according to the label's ostentatious motto, "The Sound of Human America." To my surprise, the result turns out to be five very good albums.

Love Needs, by The Harptones, is the gem of the lot, a collection of gentle, unabashedly romantic ballads sung by a quartet whose central figures, Willie Winfield, a tenor, and Raoul Cita, a

August report on

ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS BOOKS



"Like the best fairy tales 'The Darkangel' will last and be loved by readers of all ages."

—Nancy Willard,
The New York Times

"A brilliant fantasy."

—*The Boston Globe*

Astonishing praise for a first novel by a young writer of twenty-three.

The story of how MEREDITH PIERCE came to write **THE DARKANGEL** is almost as fascinating as the book itself: inspired by a dream recorded in Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, it came to her all of a piece in a kind of waking dream. Perhaps this is what gives the book the strangeness and authority of a vision, drawing us from enigma to enigma.

Even the darkangel himself is an enigma, a forbidding yet near irresistible master with a spark of goodness that makes his own salvation seem not only possible but paramount.

"Meredith Pierce has the rare ability to strike through to the deeper, mysterious levels of our consciousness. . . . **THE DARKANGEL** stirs all kinds of echoes. . . ."

—Lloyd Alexander

THE DARKANGEL
by Meredith Ann Pierce

\$11.95 at your bookstore
LITTLE, BROWN

Langdon Winner is the author of Autonomous Technology and teaches at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

songwriter and the group's musical director, have been playing together for nearly three decades. During The Harptones' heyday, in the middle 1950s, Winfield was known as the most elegant and melodic of doo-wop lead singers, a reputation he still deserves. While his voice has mellowed with age, it has lost none of its range or delicate power. He sings of love, its hazards and fulfillment, leaving no doubt that his feelings are genuine. The spartan recording method employed here provides Winfield with a perfect backdrop. The Harptones' ideal has always been unembellished affection expressed in a modest, straightforward manner. What a pleasure to hear them so cleanly recorded, singing in a manner

of music that continues to flourish despite the fact that its historical moment has passed and it no longer attracts a large audience.

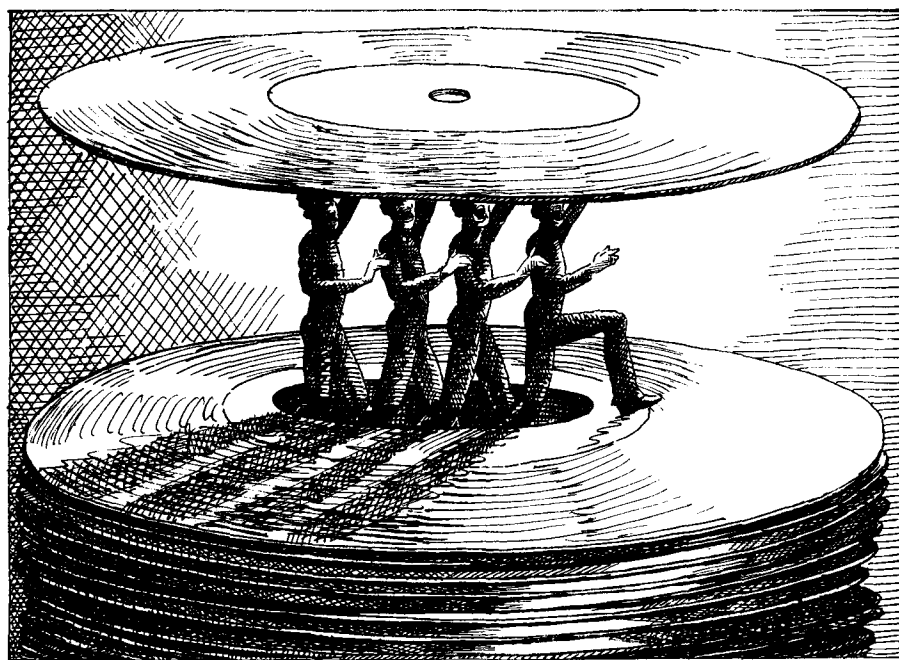
True, it is not all that uncommon for older musicians—bluesmen, for example—to survive in obscurity for decades and then suddenly reappear for a final creative outburst. In the late 1970s, just before he died, the marvelous New Orleans R&B pianist Professor Longhair did several albums that count as his best work ever. Three of the Ambient Sound records, however, restore an American oddity that few would have expected could live much beyond its initial brief appearance: late-fifties Italian/American rock crooning. Who would have guessed

sicians and others like them were left stranded by Motown and the British invasion of the middle sixties. But here they are on these new albums—The Mystics' *Crazy for You*, The Capris' *There's A Moon Out Again*, and Randy and the Rainbows' *C'mon Let's Go*—singing away as if it were the last ladies' choice of the evening. Dreamy lyrics, rudimentary harmonies, rock nonsense syllables—it's all there. I'd given up expecting to hear a male rock falsetto that wasn't a sick joke. These records are filled with sincere falsettos that recall how delightful that high-pitched distortion can be.

The artistic success of these albums is all the more astonishing when one remembers how often similar attempts have failed. There is nothing more pathetic than typical rock revivals that cart out tired old troupers for their last gasp. And think how many great singers of yesterday have embarrassed themselves and their audiences by trying to play "what today's kids want to hear." Because they play without parodying themselves, and because they so joyfully seize this new opportunity, the Ambient Sound groups are able to transcend nostalgia. What might have been an irrelevant or purely reactionary project is instead a mirror held up to the contemporary music business.

In its most prominent forms today, rock-and-roll is the stuff of mass spectacle. Records are produced by enormous transnational entertainment conglomerates that seek to promote a handful of artists into colossal "platinum acts." Concerts take place in huge sports stadiums in which bedazzled crowds stare through the glare of strobe lights and the haze of smoke bombs at fantasies enacted on the stage. The "stars" are exactly what the astronomical term implies: distant, glittering, in a totally different galaxy from the audience. Of course, popular music has always included its share of star worship. But never before has the need to maintain the distance between artists and audiences been so strong a force in the economy of the business. Companies seek big hits and disregard lesser possibilities; what's lost in the process is none of their concern.

The Ambient Sound experiment restores a possibility that the wealth, bureaucracy, and hoopla of today's music industry tend to obscure—the possibility that rock-and-roll might again be-



that has, if anything, improved with the years.

Another superior volume is *Here We Are!* by The Jive Five. A higher-energy, less tightly disciplined group than The Harptones, they had their first moment of fame with the 1961 hit "My True Story." Despite the band's long neglect, Jive Five prime mover Eugene Pitt retains his boyish zest for rock-and-roll. He sings as if permanently assigned to delight passersby on street corners in Brooklyn, his hometown. The dozen slow-rocking and up-tempo tunes here recapture a transitional stage in the evolution of rock, a time when black, urban doo-wop and rhythm-and-blues were becoming the soul music of the sixties. Pitt and his colleagues offer these songs not as fossilized remnants but as examples of a kind

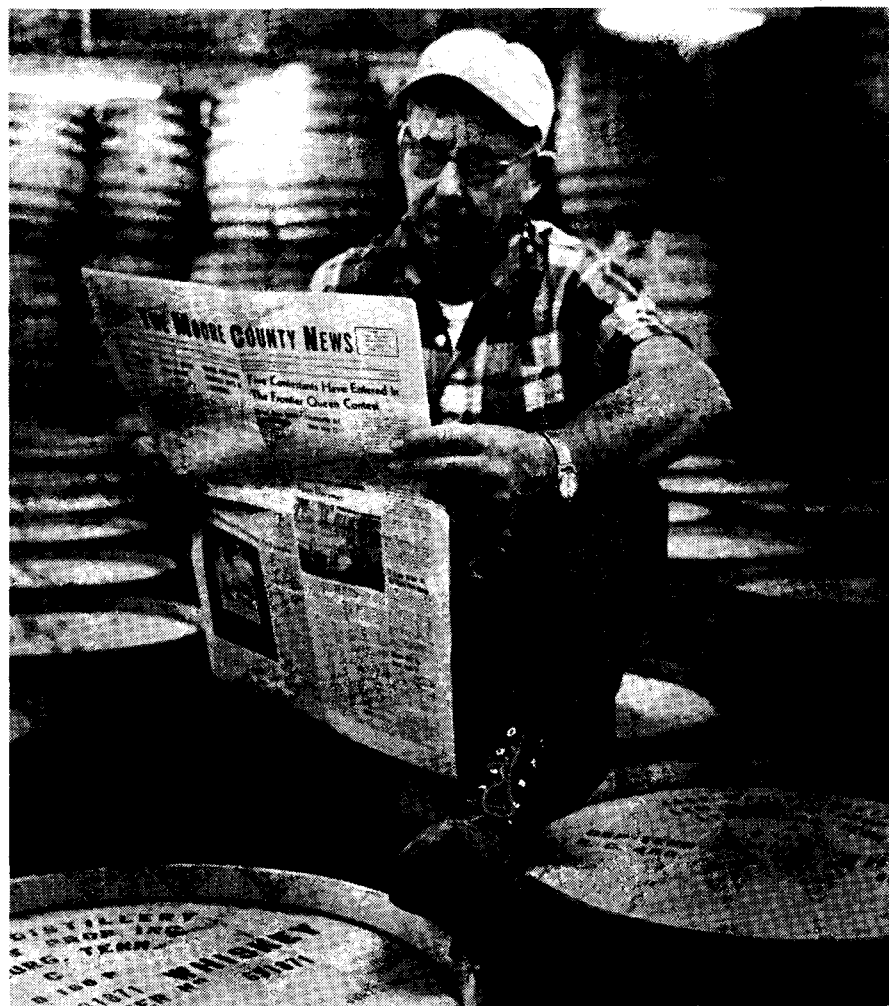
that the likes of The Mystics, The Capris, and Randy and the Rainbows would have anything left to say?

Have they been slowly perfecting their art in Holiday Inn cocktail lounges all these years? Or is there a secret Smithsonian Institution program for the preservation of "Dit, Da Dit, Dit" that we haven't been told about? Whatever the case, these fellows are still belting out melodies of the stripe crucial to the success of every senior prom a quarter of a century ago. None of these groups had more than one hit. The Mystics did "Hushabye" in 1959 and dropped off the charts; The Capris were successful with "There's A Moon Out Tonight" in 1961 and were not heard from again; Randy and the Rainbows sang "Denise" in 1963 but had no follow-up success. These mu-

come the property of ordinary people. In its origins rock is the music of neighborhoods like those in which members of The Harptones, The Jive Five, The Mystics, and others still live. In that context, performers are not all that different from the audiences they entertain. Only later is the music removed (not that many musicians object) to the domain of tours, publicity, high finance, and mass adulation. This step from the neighborhood bandstand to the world metropolis is probably an unavoidable result of success. But the question arises: Can popular music flourish in settings that systematically destroy place, time, and cultural reference? And what is an artist to do who suddenly looks around and discovers that his music has no real home?

FACED WITH THE exhaustion of contemporary rock styles, The Blasters, a band from Los Angeles, have begun another kind of rock revival, rehabilitating a powerful idiom from an earlier period. Rockabilly, the music of Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly, and a host of other mid-fifties players, arose almost simultaneously in a number of towns in the South and Southwest. It was neighborhood music that grew up to become one of the foundations of rock-and-roll as a commodity of the world metropolis, a story best illustrated in the rise of onetime rockabilly singer Elvis Presley. Rockabilly in its original form, however, has not been prominent in rock's mainstream for a long while. A rich encyclopedia of ideas, it was ripe for exploitation. The Blasters studied the old text and used it to fashion one of the year's liveliest and most ingenious albums.

As countless rock parodies and advertising jingles make clear, it is not hard to do this music poorly. This band knows how to do it well. Their album *The Blasters* begins by treating the ancient rhythms and melodic textures with scrupulous care. The interaction of guitar, drums, piano, and bass is tightly controlled but always animated. In "Marie Marie" and "Border Radio," lead singer Phil Alvin observes the conventions of classic rockabilly vocals without being subservient to them. Ingredients from other styles—a dose of New Orleans R&B, a dash of New Wave, even a sprinkling of the style of East Coast rocker Freddie Cannon (of all people)—are thrown into the mix. But a remarkable feature of the record is that the musi-



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cians understand where copying stops and their own initiative begins.

The Blasters has already moved high on the list of top-selling albums. Its audience seems composed primarily of New Wave listeners, the same people likely to enjoy records by The Police or Talking Heads. Indeed, one consequence of New Wave musical fashions has been to strip away the fans' desire for much of the sonic fluff that littered pop music in the 1970s. This has helped make room for the clean, sparse, energetic textures of rockabilly, enabling a new generation of listeners to hear the music as something fresh and up-to-the-minute.

Having achieved quick commercial success, *The Blasters* have triumphed where the Ambient Sound groups, in all likelihood, will not. Although distributed by a corporate giant, the five albums have evidently been consigned to sales oblivion. I found them in a large record store already stuck away in the oldies bin with dozens of dusty reissues. By contrast, *The Blasters* sat in huge stacks next to the cash register.

The Japanese have a wonderful practice of designating certain artists and craftsmen "Living National Treasures." Those elected to this honor—old masters of pottery, painting, and such—receive government support and continuing national acclaim for having carried on a precious national art. If such an institution were transplanted to the United States, and if craftsmanship in popular music were included in its categories, among my nominees for Living National Treasures of rock would be the likes of The Harptones and the other Ambient Sound performers. They have continued an American tradition in a graceful, loving way, without much attention and certainly without great material reward.

Witness to the importance of sustaining older styles of popular music is the fact that rock occasionally grows stale, badly in need of replenishment. Historically, the best sources of replenishment have come from the past, from exemplars such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry restored and transformed by, for example, The Beatles and The Stones in the 1960s. More recently, *The Blasters* and, in a different vein, *The Go-Go's* have helped themselves with rock revivals in miniature. It is too early to tell whether such attempts will generate a new vitality or become a kind of rock-and-roll gentrification. □

MOVIES

A DREAMER, NOT A STORYTELLER

BY LLOYD ROSE



LYRICAL, SENSUAL, WITTY, AND bloody-minded, Brian De Palma is probably the most idiosyncratic major director at work in American movies today. He has been making movies for twenty years. After a short (*Wotan's Wake*), two comedies (*The Wedding Party* and *Murder à la Mod*), a film of a play (*Dionysus in '69*), two jokey, politically acute "underground" films (*Greetings* and *Hi, Mom!*), and a Hollywood vehicle for Tommy Smothers (*Get To Know Your Rabbit*, over which he was denied full creative control), he attracted wide critical notice in 1973 with *Sisters*. His first thriller, *Sisters* chronicles the attempt of a girl reporter who has accidentally witnessed a murder to track down the killer, a psychotic woman severed from her Siamese twin. Next he made *Phantom of the Paradise*, a rock parody of *The Phantom of the Opera*; *Obsession*, a thriller in which the hero falls for his dead wife's double, who turns out to be his daughter; *Carrie*, the story of a telekinetic high school outcast's pyrotechnic revenge on her classmates; *The Fury*, which features more telekinetic teenagers; *Home Movies*, a comedy about a boy who takes sneak movies of his father's adultery; *Dressed To Kill*, in which a schizophrenic transvestite murderer is finally brought to justice by a plucky call girl and the son of a woman he has slashed to death in an elevator; and, finally, *Blow Out*, in which a political assassination leads to a string of murdered women, including the movie's demi-whore heroine.

An integral part of the texture of De Palma's movies is his references to the work of other directors, particularly Alfred Hitchcock. The witnessed-through-the-window murder in *Sisters* is from *Rear Window*. The man falling for his dead love's double in *Obsession* is from *Vertigo*. The transvestite murderer in *Dressed To Kill*, stymied by a relative of his victim, is from *Psycho*. The tour-de-

force art-museum pursuit/seduction in *Dressed To Kill* is obviously inspired by the museum sequence in *Vertigo*, as the out-of-control whirlybird ride in *The Fury* is inspired by the carousel-gone-berserk in *Strangers on a Train*. Sometimes, De Palma deliberately recreates a Hitchcock shot: Angie Dickinson, in *Dressed To Kill*, after meeting a razor-murderer in an elevator, has the same dying slide down a wall that Janet Leigh had down the tiles of the bathroom in *Psycho*. All of this has led many critics to accuse De Palma of having done nothing more in his career than attempt to remake Hitchcock's movies and fail.

De Palma's love of movies began with Hitchcock. Describing in a newspaper interview his first interest in film, at Columbia University, he spoke of *Psycho* and *Rear Window* (and also Polanski's *Repulsion*): "They seemed terrifying and wonderful to me, and suddenly I knew that I could convey my dreams on the screen." (In one of the most perceptive pieces I have read on *Dressed To Kill*, the Washington film reviewer Pat Dowell wrote, "De Palma has dreamed of *Psycho* . . .") De Palma's detractors are responding to something real when they accuse him of failing to be Hitchcock. But Hitchcock isn't De Palma's model or inspiration—he's his raw material. And De Palma's films aren't about what Hitchcock's are about, they're about the fantasies and resonances Hitchcock sets off in his head.

Hitchcock works traditionally, however brilliantly, within his chosen genre of the thriller. As a stylist, he is cool, elegant, and tidy. He is considerate of his audience's needs: although he may manipulate us or play cruel jokes on our expectations (the best and cruelest joke—killing the star one third of the way through *Psycho*), he plays fair as a storyteller. His best films are satisfying narrative experiences that deliver their thrills and tie up neatly. (Though, like De Palma, Hitchcock had his problems with critics who found holes in his plots; his scornful nickname for them was "the Plausibles.")

Although Hitchcock enjoys pricking his audience's complacency with devices such as having his heroes behave more brutally than his villains (compare, in *Notorious*, Ingrid Bergman's treatment by Cary Grant, as the American agent, and by Claude Rains, as the Nazi), his is essentially a conventional moral universe. The much-touted "moral ambigu-

Lloyd Rose is the literary manager of New Playwrights Theater, in Washington, D.C.

ity" of his movies is necessarily generated by a film world in which right and wrong are clearly defined. Murderers are caught, wrongdoers pay for their foul deeds, and if the innocent frequently suffer, at least they are avenged. Disorder is set right, even though the director may cast a jaundiced eye on the order that replaces it.

De Palma, by contrast, is an eccentric storyteller, and there will always be those in his audience who are thrown completely off by his unconcern for the niceties of a well-made plot. Why, they ask, in *Blow Out*, doesn't the threatened heroine, who is wired for sound, broadcast where the murderer is taking her? Why, in *Dressed To Kill*, does the call girl pursued by a murderer seek refuge in a subway station, and then commit the further folly of not following a policeman when his exit from a car leaves her the sole passenger? And why, in *The Fury*, does Peter Sandza (Kirk Douglas) drive a brand-new automobile into the river? Is there any discernible reason?

Brian De Palma wanted him to. He liked the image: the fog, the headlights. He liked the splash. He liked the sheer craziness of it. Similarly, in *Dressed To Kill*, he wanted to film a set piece in a subway. He wanted the shadows and the lonely platform and the too-bright, garish interiors of the subway cars. He wanted Nancy Allen's beautiful legs extended across the screen, leaping a turnstile. At this point in its story, *Dressed To Kill* ceases to be "about" a call girl seeking safety from a crazed pursuer and becomes "about" fear. The sequence is a small poem of subway terror.

De Palma often appears to be more interested in the way a scene looks than in how well it contributes to the story. At the beginning of *The Fury*, when the hero and his son are having a conversation that sets up the plot, the camera circles busily around them in a way that, the viewer finally realizes, has nothing to do with the scene. De Palma simply found the conversation boring (he's on record as not caring much for one-on-one expositional scenes) and decided to make it at least look interesting. (Here his precursor is Orson Welles, who shot the visually extraordinary aquarium sequence—full of shadows and sinuous, slow-moving fish—in *Lady From Shanghai* because he thought the dialogue was dull.)

When De Palma can work directly with image and sound, unfettered by the

demands of making plot points through dialogue or incident, he is a magician. In the first half-hour of *Blow Out*, Jack, the soundman/hero, goes out in the night to record wind blowing through trees (an aural salute to *Blow Up*, in which that same sound is heard as the photographer searches for the victim of the murder he unknowingly photographed). He stands alone on a bridge in the forest, surrounded by a night so deep and velvety that the sudden sounds he picks up on his mike—a frog's splash, an owl's screech, a car accident—rend it as if it were fabric. The whole movie—isolation, innocence, uncertainty, hidden violence, sensuality, fear—is in that one sequence.

De Palma is not primarily a storytell-

possibilities and limitations of the technical aspects of filming.

He has spoken of his work in a painter's terms: "I sometimes go for what is the strongest, most vivid color on the palette, which, in the case of movies, is violence," and "Visual imagery and sound are essential elements of a film. That's what makes cinema cinema. Most directors . . . don't really get to the essential element of form." He refers contemptuously to naturalistic film-making as "Xerox life." "I like to make very stylized set-pieces and use them to get you into a whole surrealistic or expressionistic world," he told Paul Mandell, in an interview for *Filmmakers Newsletter*. Responding to a question about ESP in



ing artist but an imagist, a surrealist, a dreamer. He is interested neither in working the morality-play territory of the most "highbrow" thrillers nor in probing the Jungian depths that admirers ascribe to the "best" horror films. His movies are jazz variations on Hitchcock, fantasias on the theme of terror.

DE PALMA'S MAJOR at Columbia was physics, and as a teenager he spent a lot of time on electronic and mechanical projects for science fairs. He comes to film from this technical background, and is fascinated with the mechanics of movie-making. Much of the voyeurism in his stories—hidden cameras, hidden mikes—is simply an exploration of the

the same interview, he said that his only interest in it was that "it lets me get into surrealism and expressionism."

These are not the opinions and attitudes of a man interested in spinning a satisfying yarn with a clear moral. He is drawn to the horror film and the thriller—genres that rely heavily on story to succeed—not because he wants to rework the familiar plots and give audiences a jolt (though he does both) but because horror movies and thrillers allow him to "get into surrealism and expressionism." He doesn't transform trash into a higher art, as, say, Graham Greene does with the espionage novel or Nabokov did with the detective story and the pornographic novel. He doesn't sanitize his subject matter; he stays

down in the dirt. He loves trash—pulp, lowbrow genres, soft-core porn, and sick jokes—and his achievement is to show us the vitality, beauty, and real emotion that lie at its heart.

As other directors have fled the “real” world into one of their own poetic expression—Bertolucci into a flat closed off from bourgeois Paris, Truffaut into a young virgin’s madness, Bergman to an island or an isolated country house or another time—so De Palma flees into the vulgar world of horror movies and thrillers. His films have a solipsistic, unrealistic atmosphere even when they are set in the “real” world. Thus, in *Blow Out*, the Liberty Day Parade, the Liberty Bell pattern stabbed into the murdered women, and the setting of the film in the home of the Liberty Bell, the City of Brotherly Love, all connect in a pattern of irony as the background for a story that illustrates the limitations, maybe the impossibility, of freedom. But it would never occur to De Palma to go for the simpler, more real-world irony of examining Philadelphia’s race relations in contrast to its utopian nickname. His details are personal and odd and they relate to one another, not to some realistic model. People have told me that they did not like *Phantom of the Paradise* because they could not believe Paul Williams in the role of a rock mogul. This, particularly in a movie in which one is asked to “believe” in contracts with the Devil signed in blood, is missing the point.

DE PALMA IS NOT a genre director who has trouble telling a straight story but an imagist whose fortunate attachment to genre keeps his feet on the ground and makes his movies accessible. Those dumb plots keep his meditations and fantasias on terror, lust, and paranoia moving—without dictating the way in which they move. If De Palma has a choice between making a narrative point clear or visually establishing a theme or mood, he’ll opt for the latter every time. And it’s in these themes, moods, and fantasies, not in his trashy plots, that his true story lies.

This true story is neither mystery nor horror tale but dream: illogical and primed with subterranean terrors and recurrent motifs. De Palma’s archetypes—misunderstood adolescents, threatened blondes, psychopathic slashers—are from pop culture, but they have their spooky, mythic power: we recog-

nize them, and they can move us to sympathy and fear. Again and again he films stories that are different in outline but that have the same latent content. The dark power of female sexuality, the ineffectiveness of men, the inability of women and men to connect sexually except through violence, the inability even to comprehend exactly what one is seeing, the absence of any safe place—these themes and motifs inform his pop archetypes and trash clichés and define the world he shows us.

It’s a bleak world. Although De Palma admits that the Catholicism of his father’s parents (he was raised a Protestant) made an “indelible impression” on him, his moral universe appears to be pagan—that is to say, it contains neither justice nor redemption. He is on record as saying, “If you have someone terribly innocent and then they get killed, then I think you’re making a statement . . . that the universe is totally absurd, and I don’t really believe that.” However, it is difficult to understand what Carrie could have done to deserve her classmates’ viciousness (or what the sympathetic gym teacher has done to become, in turn, one of Carrie’s victims), or how the heroine of *Blow Out* has earned her death, or why Peter Sandza should lose both his son and his life in *The Fury*, or why . . . the list is endless. “Hearts are broken,” as the song goes in *Phantom of the Paradise*, “and the bad guys win.” This is practically a capsule description of *Sisters*, *Phantom of the Paradise*, *The Fury*, and *Blow Out*, and though the bad guys don’t win in *Carrie* and *Dressed To Kill*, they live on in the nightmares of innocents.

Much has been written about violence against women in De Palma’s films. The blood that almost invariably ends up on their hands is not invariably theirs, but in either case they wear it naturally. Simply by being women, they draw it down on themselves. All but one of the victimized women in *Dressed To Kill* and *Blow Out* are killed for no reason other than that they are women. In *Dressed To Kill*, the femininity of a housewife (Angie Dickinson) threatens a psychopathic psychiatrist (Michael Caine); the women in *Blow Out* are killed because the murderer is establishing a sex-crime pattern to cover his true motive.

When the women are the destroyers, their power has been unleashed by their sexuality. Carrie’s telekinetic ability comes on with her first period, and her

slaughter of her classmates is triggered by the ruin of her symbolic “marriage,” as Queen of the Prom, to one of the most popular boys in the school. The heroine’s grisly, funny murder of the villain in *The Fury* begins with a kiss. Intercourse brings on murderous psychosis in the Siamese twin in *Sisters*.

This is the myth of women’s sexuality as seen through male eyes: the vulnerability, the mystery, the terror, the power. The most horrible manifestation of primal female power in De Palma’s work comes in *Dressed To Kill*, in which the psychiatrist is the victim of his own “inner” woman, who, struggling for psychic control, kills the women who affirm his masculine identity by arousing him. Trapped between the destructive woman within and the seductive women without, he cannot escape, and his sanity is overwhelmed, drowned in a flood of femininity.

This is real power, and the men in De Palma’s films who choose to engage it directly seem to have no choice but to kill or be killed. This may be the reason for one of the stranger characteristics of De Palma’s work: that no sexually active male, as such, has ever held the center of one of his movies. His male protagonists are protective of his heroines, and do not sleep with them. De Palma’s heroes are often either boys, who form a chaste, brotherly relationship with the heroine (*Dressed To Kill*, *Home Movies*), or older men who act as fathers (*Sisters*, *The Fury*, *Obsession*). When his hero is a young man in a romantic situation (*Blow Out*, *Carrie*, *Phantom of the Paradise*), De Palma simply lets the plot get in the way of consummation.

Apparent exceptions to this are only variations. In *Obsession*, in which Cliff Robertson plays a man who unwittingly falls in love with his own daughter, the mystery plot keeps this incestuous passion at bay, and the film’s emotional high point is the father-daughter reunion. In *The Fury*, Peter Sandza has a loving sexual relationship with a woman, but his character’s emotional center is in his fatherhood: in his search for his son and his protection of a young psychic girl. The pleasant black man in *Sisters* who beds the psychotic Siamese twin is brutally murdered by her almost immediately afterward, and the “man in her life” turns out to be her doctor and ex-husband, who no longer has a sexual relationship with her and tries to shield her from the consequences of her illness.

In neither of these two latter cases does De Palma film the sex scenes. For all his steamy reputation, the depiction of sexual activity on-screen in his movies is rare: I can think of only three significant incidents. In one of them (the housewife's taxi seduction in *Dressed To Kill*), the man is virtually faceless, and in the other two (Swan and Phoenix's tame bedroom scene in *Phantom of the Paradise*, and the somewhat more suggestive activity of Chris and Billy in *Carrie*), the men are villains. Since the lover in *Dressed To Kill* knowingly infects Dickinson with syphilis, a case could be made for his being a villain too.

Leave aside the villains—the sex murderers, syphilitic seducers, kidnappers, and exploiters—and look at what the men who purportedly *care* about women do to them. In *The Fury*, the hero not only fails to protect the psychic heroine but also causes the death of an old lover by involving her in his danger. The hero in *Obsession* allows his kidnapped wife to be killed. In *Blow Out*, Jack, desperate to trap the political assassin, sound-wires Sally and sends her to her death. Male chivalry—male protective strength—is all a joke. At their worst, men are murderers of women; at their best, they're bunglers, failing to protect the women they love from the violence of other men.

DE PALMA'S VIEW of traditional masculinity does not appear to be high. (His attitude is expressed most directly in *Home Movies*, in which a character's obsession with manliness leads logically to pederasty, and his younger brother, the non-threatening, adolescent movie-taker, ends up with the girl.) But he offers no alternatives, except to beg the question by avoiding sexual relationships between his heroes and heroines. This evasion finds a corollary in his use of voyeurism as a motif throughout his films. Its obvious and shopworn applicability to cinema aside (we, the audience, sit in the dark "spying" on the people on-screen, etc.), voyeurism is the only non-connective form of sexual pleasure. The voyeur is removed from and unknown to the object of his desire—safe. There's something gleeful in De Palma's prowl through the girls' locker room in *Carrie*, where the nymphets primp and laugh amid clouds of steam, but there's something cautious too: Actaeon spying on the bathing Artemis. Better not to get involved. When a man and a woman

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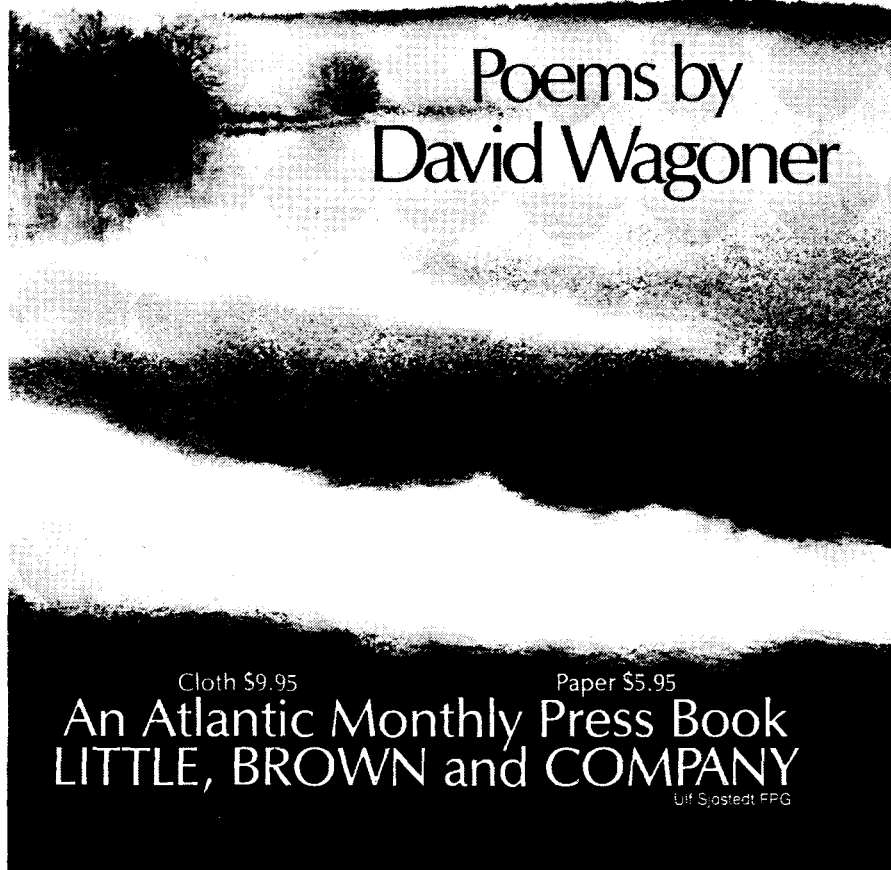
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connect sexually, one of them ends up dead.

But the voyeur's remove is also his point of vulnerability. He is at the mercy of his unwitting object, who may draw a shade or move out of sight, or prove not to be who he thought he was watching at all. The watcher can never be sure of what he sees. De Palma's characters, accidentally witnessing murders, never quite get all the facts they need to understand what they've seen. Nor can they ever be sure that they themselves are not being spied on—watched, followed, photographed, bugged. De Palma expands the ramifications of voyeurism to create a universe permeated with paranoia, in which no one is really safe and nothing can really be known.

De Palma is so manipulative of an audience's emotions that it is easy to feel he is disdainful of us. But he is in fact with the audience, staring at his dreams on the screen. They're his dreams, all right, but they appear to have yielded their secrets no more to him than to us. His camera moves into a scene very slowly, taking everything in, and withdraws just as slowly. It circles; it perches high and out-of-the-way; it fixes on a glove, or a slowly turning doorknob, or a man alone on a bridge in the rich black night. His images seem to be as new to him as to his audience—he is caught and held by them, unable to look away. He studies them, rapt or puzzled or curious—maybe, sometimes, a little frightened. Often, he is simply amused.

Some of the things De Palma can make us laugh at are a naive, lovable woman being infected with syphilis; a man having all of his teeth pulled and replaced with aluminum dentures; a teenaged girl's dreams of social acceptance being shattered; a man exploding. This is not your sweet-blooming, garden-variety sense of fun. It is gallows humor, and it salts De Palma's world view and keeps his movies free of self-importance, self-pity, and platitudes about the value of suffering.

De Palma doesn't try to make comforting moral sense of the world. He's not a sentimentalist, and his compassion is not relieved by any pretense that life is kind. Nor does he fall into indulgences of romantic pessimism. His view of life lacks both hope and rancor. It might be summed up as "The joke's on us," an opinion with which I doubt any thinking person, the truly religious aside, can quarrel. □

BOOKS

A STUDY IN FEAR AND COURAGE

BY JACK BEATTY

SIX ARMIES IN NORMANDY: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris
by John Keegan. Viking, \$17.95.



IT WAS THE POIGNANT delusion of the nineteenth century that history was rational. We know better; the twentieth century has taught us that the only human quality we can expect from history besides cruelty is irony. The irony of history left its mocking hand all over D-Day and the great ten-week battle for Normandy that followed it, and, crucially, on the plan that inspired the whole operation. It was the brainchild of an American officer named Albert Wedemeyer, and the odd thing about him was that he was a 1938 graduate of the German Staff College, where he learned the strategy and tactics that would guide the Allies to victory in Normandy. The Kriegsakademie taught geopolitics as the basis of strategy; according to this dispensation, the U.S. could not win a world war with air or sea power alone, but must exploit its isolated geopolitical position by invading the European continent and fighting a land battle, in which tanks would be the decisive weapon. Blitzkrieg—or Breakout, as the Allies were to call it—would be the master tactic.

Submitted to the President in September of 1941, Wedemeyer's plan was called the Victory Program. Picked up and refined by General Eisenhower, his successor at the War Plans Division, it became just that. "Its conception and delivery was to be one of the decisive acts of the Second World War," according to John Keegan.

Mr. Keegan, a professor at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, is the author of that singular book *The Face of Battle*, a 1975 history of warfare, and he is too careful a historian to make such judgments as the one above promiscuously. His way of doing history favors "intense particularity" over flaccid generalization. One can be sure that he will not miss an irony such as Wedemeyer's having matriculated at the German war college, for he has the novelist's eye for

vivid fact. Reading him is therefore not only instructive but a literary pleasure. If it seems perverse to take pleasure from a factual account of war, then perhaps a distinction needs to be made between the abstract category "war," of which it is a test of one's moral mettle to disapprove, and "battle," which is too humanly complex a subject to elicit only moral resistance. No one has put that complexity more eloquently than John Keegan.



The study of battle is . . . always a study of fear and usually of courage; always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of insubordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation or catharsis; always of uncertainty and doubt, misinformation and misapprehension, usually also of faith and sometimes of vision; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, compassion; above all, it is always a study of solidarity and usually also of disintegration—for it is towards the disintegration of human groups that battle is directed.

Those words from *The Face of Battle* evince the quality of the sensibility that in *Six Armies* has produced an outstand-

ing narrative of battle in this richly imaginative sense.

Six Armies begins with a charming chapter on Mr. Keegan's "war" when he was a boy growing up in the west of England, far from the danger of the conflict but not from its excitement. Even when England stood alone, young Keegan was sure it would win; but when the Americans arrived, showering chocolates on the countryside like manna, he became smug. Against the British will to fight, incarnated in Winston Churchill, and the American plenitude of materiel, Hitler did not stand a chance. The invasion of the continent would soon take place; the war would end.

It was therefore something of a shock for Keegan when, in the 1950s, declassified wartime documents revealed the degree of British irresolution before the prospect of an invasion. It was the Americans who, in line with Wedemeyer's plan, urged a cross-Channel invasion as early as the fall of 1942. The British repeatedly "shrank from the knife," first urging on FDR the North African invasion and then following up that diversion with the invasions of Sicily and Italy in the hope of thinning out the German defenses in France. As Keegan shows in a fine chapter on the diplomacy of D-Day, it was only under constant pressure not just from Chief of Staff Marshall but from Molotov, the Russian foreign minister, who pleaded with FDR for the opening of a second front to relieve his mortally threatened country, that the British shook off the incubus of the agonizing stalemate of 1914–1918 and committed themselves to the invasion. It proved a costly delay.

In a recent book, the historian John Grigg argues persuasively that by failing to mount an invasion in 1943, the Allies allowed the Germans vastly to strengthen their Atlantic Wall defenses, thereby costing many Allied casualties on D-Day and perhaps even the lives of the millions of Jews murdered in 1944. Such speculation, however, is idle. What is certain is that General Eisenhower's doubts about the 1944 invasion were so serious that even as the ships of his armada were leaving their English ports on June 5, he was writing these remarkable lines:

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place were

Jack Beatty is the literary editor of *The New Republic*.

based on the best information available. The troops, the air and navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

"These," says John Keegan, "were the words of a great man and a great soldier." Indeed.

THE REST OF THE book is made up of chapters on the parts played in the far-flung, multi-phase battle by Keegan's six armies: the American airborne troops who landed on the eve of D-Day behind Omaha Beach and performed the critical mission of frustrating German counterattacks against the vulnerable troops on the beaches; the Canadians who faced the guns on Juno Beach, thirty-five miles to the east of the parachutists, haunted by fears of another Dieppe, where so many of their countrymen had fallen two years before; the Scottish Division, which made the costly but important offensive east of Caen in late June, and the British tank force, whose advance west of Caen in mid-July, though checked, inflicted terrible punishment on the defending Germans; the German Army itself, many of whose senior officers were plotting to kill Hitler even as their troops, with no air cover and no hope of replacement or relief, were making a herculean effort to drive the Allies into the sea; the Polish Division, which made a gallant attempt to staunch the German escape through the Falaise gap at the very moment the Home Army in Warsaw was fighting to wrest the city from the retreating Germans before the advancing Russians arrived; and the extraordinary Free French forces of Leclerc and De Gaulle, who liberated Paris on August 25. Each chapter becomes a portrait of national character as revealed in the crucible of combat.

In this Tolstoyan canvas, the chapter on the airborne nighttime assault seems to me the strongest and most coherent narrative of the lot. In the course of it, Mr. Keegan touches on the most interesting of details, and moves with ease from the big picture to the humblest fact. He treats us to a brief history of mass airborne operations and tells us why they are now obsolete; he lets us heft the parachutists' heavy packs, then jumps with us through the open door when the green light blinks on, and warns us to be ready for a concussive shock when the chute pops open. He

notes the "savage disciplinary consequences and total social ignominy" faced by the seven troopers out of 13,000 who refused to jump, and he provides a grisly quotation from a witness to the fatal fall of seventeen men whose chutes failed to open: "They made a sound like large ripe pumpkins being thrown down to burst against the ground."

To compare Keegan's pages on the battles that ensued with even so fine a first-hand account as that of General Gavin, who was one of the leading officers on the scene, is to see why history remains an art. In his book *On To Berlin*, the admirable general gives a terse version of an ambush that a handful of his troopers sprang on a large German column at the crossroads hamlet of Neuville-au-Plain. Gavin has the Germans marching "as though on peacetime maneuver," but in Keegan they are "singing—another of those bizarre flights of insouciance displayed by the defenders throughout the morning." This is a superb example of his method of "intense particularity," and one doesn't know what to admire more, its scholarship or its artistry. The whole book is full of similar touches.

This is history energized by a will to literary significance. By turns horrific and stirring, *Six Armies*, so its author dares to hope in his epilogue, may be the epic of Europe's last invasion. □

SHORT REVIEWS



FAMOUS LAST WORDS by Timothy Findley. Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, \$14.95. Mr. Findley's novel can be reasonably described as a mythologizing of recent history—specifically, the story of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor—and, like any proper myth, it lends itself to a variety of interpretations, most of them sinister. The writing is superb, the action is lively and ranges over half the world, and the characters include a number of the great who are also the late and cannot sue for libel. The book is entertaining and provocative of thought.

THE DIARY OF VIRGINIA WOOLF edited by Anne Olivier Bell assisted by Andrew McNeillie. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$17.95. Volume Four covers the years

1931 through 1935, and, like its predecessors, is alive with mercurial rejoicings, lamentations, visual details, acid character sketches, and cheerful spite. "Well, let me hope that all his 8 volumes will fail, that he won't be able to pay his income tax & that Michael will be eaten by leopards." Having laid this curse on a harmless literary type, Woolf brings real sympathy to the autobiography of Anthony Hope, about the last author that one would expect her to have read.

TO ABSENT FRIENDS FROM RED SMITH. Atheneum, \$17.95. During his long career as a sportswriter, Smith had occasion to write what amounted to obituaries of distinguished athletes, coaches, and fellow journalists, which he did with grace and wit and affection. These pieces, assembled in one volume, are naturally too funereal to be read straight through without raising echoes of *Timor Mortis conturbat me*. They should be taken, and admired, a few at a time.

THE RED SMITH READER edited by Dave Anderson. Random House, \$15.95. Smith has been described so often as the greatest sportswriter of all time that it seems bromidic to repeat the claim, but what else can one do? (Plain truth has a habit of turning into cliché.) He was the best, and this assortment of his columns, covering fifty years and every known sport, proves it.

CORDELIA? by Garson Kanin. Arbor House, \$13.95. The plot of Mr. Kanin's novel explores the troubles of a prominent actor who has recruited his three daughters to play Regan, Goneril, and Cordelia to his King Lear. (His equally prominent actress wife is playing the Fool in full female fig—one rather wishes for elaboration on that performance.) As plot, the less attention paid to it, the better, for the foundation of the events lies on quicksand. The fun of the novel—and it is fun—lies in the backstage detail, the author's enormous knowledge of theatrical technique, his deft and unpredictable use of quotation, and his whiplash dialogue.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE by Jiří Gruša, translated by Peter Kussi. Farrar Straus & Giroux, \$15.95. Mr. Gruša's hero is merely applying for a job, but, in Communist Czechoslovakia, he must fill out a questionnaire about his family, education, town, neighbors, opinions, and so

Spiders

E.O. Wilson: Let me remind you that people everywhere, a large percent of the population, at a very early age have already developed a deep horror at the sight of snakes or spiders with nothing more than gentle nudging from their parents, if that. Yet, in spite of the fact that parents constantly reinforce their children against going near electric sockets, automobiles, knives and the like, phobias against such objects rarely develop.

Marvin Harris: Let's go back again to the possibility that these phobias are genetically programmed — which I'm willing to grant. The overwhelming bulk of the socially conditioned response repertoires of different human societies consists, by your own admission, of culturally determined rather than genetically determined traits. Then it seems to me that when one offers a cogent culturological explanation of these phobias, it has to be considered that this explanation is the only one offered in isolation.

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on. His answers are impertinently semi-fanciful and unsuitably but delightfully verbose. They add up to a satirical view of the past and an oblique criticism of the present. Mr. Gruša is undoubtedly a fine young writer; it appears that he is also largely unpublished in his homeland.

THE SHABUNIN AFFAIR by *Walter Kerr*. Cornell, \$14.95. The author has had access to documents giving the military side of this "Episode in the Life of Leo Tolstoy." In 1866, when he was long out of the army, Tolstoy undertook the court-martial defense of a soldier who had attacked an officer (punched him in the nose, to be precise), an offense requiring execution. Tolstoy pleaded insanity for his drunken client, but lost the case; the man was shot. The official papers Mr. Kerr has studied suggest, but do not entirely prove, that the military authorities intended to make an example of the unfortunate Shabunin regardless of who defended him or how. If Mr. Kerr had stopped there, all would be well, but he has blown the matter into a windy, outrageously speculative account of the case's allegedly lifelong and traumatic effect on Tolstoy. This is scholarship turned melodrama.

STANDING FAST by *Roy Wilkins with Tbm Mathews*. Viking, \$16.95. The late Roy Wilkins worked nearly half a century for the NAACP, serving twenty-two years as executive director. During that time, and despite charges of languor and Uncle Tomism, he stuck firmly to the policy of advancing black rights and opportunities by legal means, and his record of successful court cases is impressive. The book is extremely interesting both as autobiography and as social history, for Wilkins begins with his family's origins in Mississippi, his own comfortable upbringing in St. Paul, and his early experiences as a journalist with an expanding black newspaper in Kansas City. It was Kansas City—villainously racist at that time—that aroused his ambition to do something about the position of black citizens. That he never wavered in his determination to achieve progress by civilized means is evidence of immense self-control and patience, for his story abounds in episodes that would justify rampant fury.

FELICE by *Angela Davis-Gardner*. Random House, \$13.50. The time is 1921 and the place is a French Catholic girls'

school in Nova Scotia, where the pubescent Felice is a bright but difficult student and the idolized Sister Agatha is going outrageously dotty. Ms. Davis-Gardner is adroit in conveying the mixture of juvenile mischief, romanticized piety, and suppressed sexuality that pervades L'Académie du Sacré Sang. It is not the least of her achievements that the reader, offered the story through the limited vision of Felice, comes to feel deep sympathy for the Mother Superior who has to manage the place.

THE ATOM STATION by Halldor Laxness, translated by Magnus Magnusson. Second Chance Press, \$16.95. The Icelandic Nobel Prize winner published this novel in 1948. It appeared in Britain in 1961 but has never before been issued in the United States, possibly because it was considered pro-Communist, possibly because Mr. Laxness's sardonic, deadpan style of comedy has never attracted much interest in this country. Such neglect is regrettable, for his plague-on-all-your-houses view of government is wickedly attractive, his absurd political and artistic characters are internationally recognizable, and his dim view of atomic enterprise is no longer either exotic or unreasonable.

ADVENTURES IN ARCHAEOLOGY by Jacquetta Hawkes. St. Martin's, \$19.95. Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the subject of this able biography, was a major force in the development of archaeological excavation and research in Britain, where he explored Roman remains and Iron Age earthworks and trained a generation of students to do likewise. He also served with distinction in both world wars, aroused public interest in and backing for archaeological projects, revitalized several moribund antiquarian organizations, published an astounding number of books both scholarly and popular, and became a positive star on a television quiz show. These worthy achievements aside, he was a man of literally violent temper, an indefatigable seducer of young women, inclined to jump to conclusions unwarranted by archaeological evidence, and stubbornly addicted to the notion that aboriginal Britons lived in holes in the ground. Reason eventually prevailed on the last point. He was, in short, not altogether a nice man, but decidedly remarkable and certainly valuable to his profession.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Answers
to the
July
Puzzler,

"NUMBER PUZZLE"



Eleven entries are elements, clued by their atomic numbers in the diagram.

Across. 10. YOGI (double def.) 11. PAL(LIAT)E (tail rev.) 13. D-RATTED 15. ROT-H 17. OLD(IE)S 18. MEANS (double def.) 19. GO-T UP (put rev.) 20. PO(E)T 22. "L" IS "T" 26. (d)INNER 28. NE(A)T 30. DIAL (laid rev.; "laid back") 33. SPLAT (double def.) 36. BI(TI)NG 37. COCK-ADES 38. IS-IS 39. N-ASCENT 41. LUG-E 42. BEMUSE (anag.) 43. ELDERS (double def.) Down. 2. H(OR-O-LOG)E 4. IN(T)REPID (anag. + t) 5. MAD-IS-ON A-VENUE 6. CLOT-HE 7. A(LAR)M 8. BAR-GAIN (pun) 12. T-HEN 14. NO-EL 21. TRAIPE-D (anag. + d) 23. ST(ON)INGS 27. A(RT-IC)LE 29. (s)TAKE 34. PO-L-L 35. T-AXIS 37. CRAB (hidden rev.)

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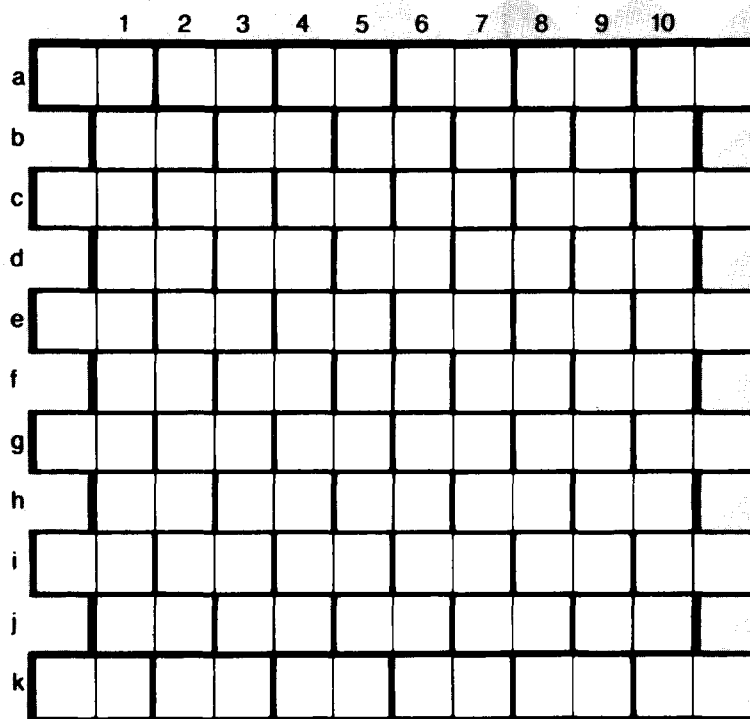
THE ATLANTIC PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

BUILDING BLOCKS

Answers to the clues lettered a–k, when broken into two-letter segments, yield building blocks for the construction of a wall. For example, ANSWER would be broken into AN, SW, and ER, and these blocks could occur anywhere in their designated row. Their proper positions are cemented by the Down words 1–10, which are entered normally in the order listed. Additional words are formed by the twelve letters projecting at the sides of the wall. Answers include four proper nouns, a Latin word, and an archaism at f. Punctuation may be used deceptively.

*The solution to last month's
Puzzler appears on page 97.*



ACROSS

- a. Building block number (4)
Poor Tim's ill . . . he's not himself (8)
- b. Operated inside secret agents' skulls (6)
Howdy, North Carolina, from here in Pompeii (4)
- c. Rent shop with no façade (4)
Called in a Russian, having made plans (8)
- d. Cigar goes (it exploded) (6)
Hesitation in high school girls? (4)
- e. Backsliding sin, wearing (tsk!) tank top? (6)
In back, taunt imbecile (6)
- f. One so excellent must be immortal (6)
Metalworker almost dealt a blow (4)
- g. Is the owner of 10-speed (6)

- h. Prepared edict about English fraud (6)
- i. Former vice president's sticker (4)
Covering G string can be a pain (6)
- j. Someone who entertains a large number (4)
Devastated city has to bother a short story writer (8)
- k. Dance round (4)
Bizarre aliens made of sodium chloride (6)
- l. Grin maliciously about shortstop being inferior (6)
Hate to collect exams? (6)

DOWN

- 1. The temperature is in an estimated number? (11)
- 2. Sounded like Ella made tracks (7)
Thaw out, eh? (4)

- 3. Intentionally lose most of the fight (5)
A note on court garb for low life? (6)
- 4. Band's sound (4)
Timeless illiterate's signature erased from surface (7)
- 5. Bird can set in near-storm (11)
- 6. Embraced by two relatives, the man interjected remark (11)
- 7. Sweet potato and macaroni fixed after noon (7)
Forbids second-rate articles (4)
- 8. Electra's brother's a bad sort, see (7)
American editor is not new (4)
- 9. Republican and radical Saudi spoke (6)
Claim anagram game piece having the letter "T" (5)
- 10. Funny line about calling act "sociable" at a party (11)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, write to The Atlantic Reprint Department, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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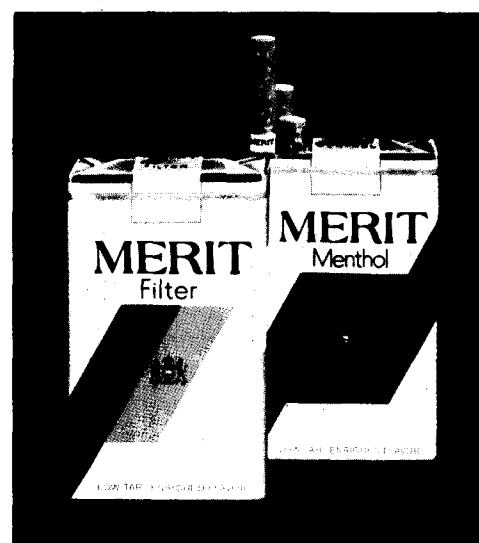
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100's Men: 9 mg "tar," 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec'81